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Dante

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THE INFERNO

OF

DANTE,

TRANSLATED.

BY

[17]

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TO

THE LORD BROUGHAM AND VAUX,

Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain,

ONE OF THE MOST ARDENT ADMIRERS

OF

DANTE.

INTRODUCTION.

To enable us to understand the design of Dante's poem, it may be useful to take a short review of the times in which he wrote.

In the beginning of the fourteenth century, Italy presents a lamentable picture of darkness and misery. At that unhappy period, the pure religion of the primitive Christians had been wholly corrupted by the superstitious innovations of the Court of Rome.* Over all affairs, both ecclesiastical and political, she exercised a withering and debasing influence. The faculties were enchained —the feelings deadened—by the inventions of priestcraft; and the commission of crime encouraged by the sale of indulgences.† Hence resulted a state of morals more gross than can well be conceived:—for if the example set by many of the Popes was as infamous as we are compelled to

* See note, Inf. i. 2.

† Paradiso, xxvii. 53.

believe*—what must have been the condition of the people,† who looked up to them as infallible? So immersed was mankind in vice and ignorance, and so overgrown was religion with heresies and schisms, as to create a belief among the more enlightened, that the reign of Satan upon earth had begun, and that the Pope himself was the Antichrist foretold in the Revelations.‡

The evils thus arising from religious abuses were aggravated by the violence of party spirit.—Guelfs and Ghibellins, partisans of the Pope or of the Emperor, carried on a constant and deadly warfare throughout the numerous states into which Italy was divided. The Guelfs had blindly rendered themselves the instruments of the Church; and while fighting, as they imagined, in defence of their liberties, were unconsciously forging for themselves the fetters of a degrading tyranny. Too weak to unite Italy under one government;—and at the same time, too powerful to submit to the Emperors of Germany, the Court of Rome preserved her political ascendency by fomenting the antipathies of the

* Inf. vii. 46. xix. *passim*, and notes to ditto.

† Purgatorio, xvi. 58. 100.

‡ Rev. cap. xii. xiii. xvii. Daniel, cap. vii. (see notes to both in Mant's Bible.) Inf. xix. 106. Ugo Foscolo, Discorso, p. 388. Rossetti, Sullo Spirito Antipapale, p. 44. Horne's Introd. c. iv. p. 376.

two factions.* Whenever her cause appeared declining, foreigners were called in to its support. Hence Italy was deluged with blood,† and her welfare sacrificed to ambition and avarice.‡

With this picture before our eyes, let us imagine Dante—a being of transcendent genius and profound learning, imbued with strong religious and patriotic feelings, roused as it were from sleep, in the full maturity of his intellect, to the contemplation of this sad reality. Let us imagine him in the situation he describes—thrown amid a vicious generation, so darkened by superstition, and hardened in iniquity, that he might justly describe himself as wandering in a rank and savage wilderness;§—

" Like one lost in a thorny wood,
That rends the thorns, and is rent with the thorns;
Seeking a way, and straying from the way,
Not knowing how to find the open air,
But toiling desperately to find it out."

Third part Henry VI. Act iii. Sc. 2.

Through this vale of misery, all traces of the straight path were wholly obliterated;‖ and even the upright and virtuous Dante found great difficulty in extri-

* Machievelli, Disc. su Tit. Liv. i. 12.

† Par. xxvii. 26. 58.

‡ Ugo Foscolo Disc. p. 78, 98.—Notes to Inf. i. 2. 49.—Purg. vi. 103. Par. xxx. 139.

§ Inf. i. 2. ‖ Inf. i. 3.

cating himself from the mazes of error.* How he first became entangled, he was unable, he says, to discover;†—so immersed was he in sleep at the time he abandoned the true path; or, as he intimates in the fifteenth canto,‡—so young as to be incapable of exercising a sound discretion. The recollection of the past came over his soul like the bitterness of death; when, awakened to a conviction of the truth, he contemplated the dangers he had escaped.§ But with these personal feelings were blended those of a far more comprehensive character; and, in the miseries of his native land, Dante felt all the sympathy which the most devoted patriotism could inspire. The abominable practices of his countrymen—their moral and political degradation—the licentiousness and turbulence of their governments, and above all, the flagrant corruption of the Roman church, overwhelmed him in sorrow and dismay.‖

On arriving however at the termination of the valley, he looks upward, and beholds a mountain,¶ illuminated with the beams of the sun. His eyes are directed with joy to this beautiful abode of virtue, upon which reason sheds her unerring ray. To impart to others that light which had been gra-

* See notes, Inf. i. 3.
† Inf. i. 10.
‡ Verse 49.
§ Inf. i. 26.
‖ Purg. vi. 76. *et seq.*
¶ Inf. i. 13.

ciously vouchsafed to himself is the object of his earnest desire. Animated by the prospect, he proceeds on his journey with sanguine hopes of emancipating Italy from superstition, and of effecting a great reformation in the religious and political state of his distracted country.* Scarcely has he begun to ascend the mountain, when he is opposed by three wild beasts,—a Panther, a Lion, and a she-Wolf. The restlessness of the Panther,† its varied colours, and cruel disposition, afford a lively representation of Florence, divided into the implacable factions of the Neri and Bianchi, and continually fluctuating at the caprice of a changeable and headstrong populace.‡ The continued vexation experienced from this animal, impedes the progress of Dante, and frequently inclines him to retreat. Various circumstances, however, combine to encourage him:§—the beautiful season of spring—the religious consolation of Easter—the commencement of a new century, (1300,) ushered in by a solemn jubilee, and a change in the state of parties at Florence, described by the gay skin of the Panther,‖ present to him the brightest omens of success.

* Inf. i. 41. Purg. xvi. 94. Par. ix. 142. Ibid. xxvii. 142.
† Inf. i. 32.
‡ Ugo. Foscolo Disc. p. 379. Purg. vi. 145.
§ Inf. i. 37, *et seq.* ‖ Rossetti, Com.

But these hopes are soon dissipated by the appearance of the Lion,—emblematical of France, and her ambitious interference in the government of Florence. The poet is at the same time attacked by the she-Wolf, intended to represent the avaricious Court of Rome. These two powers uniting to oppose the virtuous endeavours of Dante, he despairs of reaching the summit of the beautiful mountain. He sees his miserable country, for which he possessed the most ardent love, become a prey to the ambition of foreign potentates, and exposed to all the calamities of tyranny and misgovernment. From the union of temporal with spiritual power in the person of the Pope, these manifold evils derived their source.* Hence, to confine the authority of the See of Rome to religious affairs, and to re-establish a constitutional monarchy in Italy, were the two great objects Dante had in view. But to compose the jealousies of the numerous republics, and to unite them under one government, could only be effected by restoring the privileges of the Emperors of Germany, which the Court of Rome, in her lust of sway, had in a great measure annihilated. As heirs of the Cæsars, the Emperors were the lawful monarchs of Italy; and to the revival of their

* Purg. vi. 103, xvi. 110. 127. Par. xxvii. 140.

dominion Dante, therefore, looked forward with anxious expectation.*

Disappointed in the hope of executing his beneficial projects, Dante is driven back into the dark valley, where the voice of reason is mute;† when the shade of Virgil ‡ appears before his eyes, and recommends him to climb the mountain by some other road—declaring it fruitless to attempt a passage in opposition to the Wolf, "whose greediness will permit none to tread the same path with herself, but will assuredly effect their destruction."§ For the present, he says, Italy is doomed to submit to her controul, and to suffer from the intrigues of the Court of Rome with the kings of the earth, ‖ till the arrival of a prophetic conqueror, described under the image of the Greyhound, who, the poet vainly hoped, would restore peace to his country, and chase the Wolf back into her native hell.¶ In the meantime Dante is to awaken the Italians to a sense of their condition, and to prepare them for the change by dispersing the clouds of ignorance and error. Nor are the means his genius suggests, unworthy of so noble an undertaking. A

* Purg. vi. 88. 114. xvi. 94. Par. xxvii. 145. xxx. 137. De Monarchia, *passim*.

† Inf. i. 60.

‡ Inf. i. 73. note.

§ Inf. i. 96.

‖ See notes, Inf. i. 49. 100.

¶ See note, Inf. i. 101.

poem is to be constructed of a peculiar kind,* which shall contain the most convincing evidence, blended with beauties so inimitable as to ensure its never failing reception in the hearts of men throughout all ages. To enable him to execute his arduous design, Virgil offers to become his guide,† and to lead him through Hell and Purgatory;—that thus visiting, as it were, in turn, every description of sinner, he might be enabled to make a lasting record of what he had seen, and reveal to mankind ‡ the iniquity of those hypocritical Pastors who had led their flock away from the right path, and covered the land with the darkness of the shadow of death. Should he wish, says Virgil, after reviewing the punishments assigned to the wicked, to behold the blessed abode of the saints in Paradise, and stimulate his countrymen to virtue by a description of heavenly bliss—" a soul more worthy shall conduct his flight."§

In the opening of the second canto, after an invocation to the Muse, Dante expresses his reverence for that holy place, where, by divine authority the papal throne was established. ‖ This respect towards the See of Rome he maintains throughout the poem,¶ and dwells with delight upon its

* Purg. xvi. 42.
† Inf. i. 113.
‡ See note, Inf. ii. 121. Par. xxvii. 66.
§ Inf. i. 122.
‖ Inf. ii. 27.
¶ Inf. xix. 100.

original purity;* but, with the warmest indignation and zeal for religion, views the conduct of those evil shepherds whose iniquities had brought scandal upon the Catholic faith. It is only against the usurpers of St. Peter's chair, † "who," he says, "had crucified our Saviour a second time," ‡ that he declares his uncompromising hostility. §

To avenge the wrongs of the true Christian Church, was the secret hope he cherished in his bosom: ‖—to bring peace and happiness to mankind, by the restoration of pure religion, was the high reward he proposed to himself in the execution of "that sacred poem, upon which heaven and earth laid their hands, and to which, for many years, he devoted himself with painful assiduity." ¶

In contemplating at first this mighty work, ** the poet feels a distrust of his ability to perform it, and with singular modesty expresses doubts as to his fitness for so arduous an undertaking. To emulate at the same time, the poetical fancy of Virgil, who led Æneas through the shades below, and the powerful faith of the Apostle St. Paul, which had enabled him to pierce the mysteries of the next world, was indeed the greatest effort to which the faculties of man could aspire. ††

* Inf. xix. 111.
§ Par. xxv. 6.
** Inf. ii. 12. 35.
† Par. xxvii. 22.
‖ Purg. xx. 95.
†† Inf. ii. 32.
‡ Purg. xx. 88.
¶ Par. xxv. 1.

From the mention of St. Paul in this canto, and from several other passages, particularly in the Purgatorio and Paradiso,* it may be gathered, as Ugo Foscolo justly points out, that Dante looked upon himself in the light of a person destined by heaven to effect a great change in the moral and political world;† and had mankind been more enlightened, the doctrines he promulgated, might, at the time, have produced that reformation which, at a later period, was effected by Luther.‡

The doubts in which Dante was involved, are removed by Virgil, who relates the manner in which he had been sent to his assistance. The mercy of God,§ commiserating his unhappy state, had been the first, he says, to prevail upon justice to temper her strict decrees. Lucia or Grace‖ descends accordingly, and intreats Beatrice, or heavenly Wisdom, to exert herself in behalf of one of her most devoted friends, engaged in mortal combat with sin and death on the tempestuous flood of human passion.¶ Beatrice swiftly leaves her blest abode, and coming to Virgil,** with earnest entreaty implores his aid to rescue her friend from the

* Purg. xvi. 40. xx. 94. Par. xxiv. 3.
† Ugo Foscolo, Disc. pp. 77. 82. 250. 381. ‡ Ibid. p. 83.
§ Inf. ii. 94. ‖ Inf. ii. 100.
¶ Inf. ii. 107. ** Inf. ii. 53.

perils by which he is surrounded. Of the three heavenly Beings who thus interest themselves in Dante's welfare, Mercy and Grace* may be considered imaginary, introduced to personify these attributes of the Deity. Of Beatrice, it is difficult to speak, without entering at large into the life of the poet. It may be sufficient to observe, that in his youth, Dante became enamoured of this lady, whose premature death seemed but to strengthen and purify his affection, and to render her, as it were, a part of his very existence. He never ceased to regard his departed Beatrice with feelings of the deepest devotion, and to look upon her in the light of a guardian angel.

Encouraged by the assurance of heavenly protection, the ardour of Dante is revived: he expresses his eagerness to pursue the new path recommended by Virgil,† and acknowledges him as his guide and master. He desists from any open contention with the Court of Rome; and summoning all the energies of his mind in the execution of his "sacred poem,"‡ prepares more effectual means to accomplish the purpose which he believes assigned to him by heaven.—Calling up from their graves a long list of departed pontiffs, he gives to the world a retrospective view of their lives, and fearlessly ex-

* See note to Inf. ii. 97. † Inf. ii. 136. ‡ Par. xxiii. 62. xxv. 1.

poses the depravity which had brought such manifold evils on the world.

"Fully relying," he says, "in the promises made to Daniel, that the Divinity will be himself a buckler to the advocates of truth;—putting on the breast-plate of faith, according to the admonition of St. Paul;—heated with that burning coal, which one of the Seraphim took from the celestial altar, and applied to the lip of Isaiah;—and strengthened by the arm of Him, who, with his blood, redeemed us from the powers of darkness; I will advance to the struggle, to drive away that false and wicked one before the face of the whole world."*

By contemplating the effects of sin—by reflecting on the various and dreadful punishments it incurs, the mind is to be impressed in the first place, with an awful sense of divine justice. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom;" and the first fruits of righteousness are to be produced by the terrors of hell. Convinced of the dreadful consequences of vice, and of the vanity of earthly pursuits, the soul rises to a contemplation of those joys reserved for the righteous in the blessed regions of Paradise. "Love then casteth out fear," and thus man proceeds "from strength to strength," till the creature of earth is fitted to become an inhabitant of heaven.

* De Mon. Lib. iii.

Upon considerations of this nature* is founded the grand scheme of Dante's poem, and with this object he is conducted by his guide to the gates of Hell.

In the foregoing remarks it has been attempted to draw a simple and consistent sketch of the design of Dante's poem, without entering into the discussion of those minor points which must be ever involved in obscurity, and upon which every one may entertain a different opinion. To those who take up the Divina Commedia for the sake of its poetical beauties, the solution of the curious questions, which are now at issue in the literary world † is of comparatively little importance. An allegorical allusion to this life, the poem may indeed be supposed to contain;—for if it be true, that wicked men on earth are perpetually suffering from the effects of their own evil passions, and that departed spirits, in their separate state of existence, prior to the final judgment, retain their former feelings;‡—then in a poem of this description, a resemblance must necessarily exist between the condition of the dead and the living, independent of any design or intention of the author.—By the contemplation of departed spirits deriving joy or misery in the next world from their

* Par. xxv. 43.

† See Edin. Review, No. 110. Art. Rossetti's Dante.

‡ Inf. vi. 103.

conduct in this, Dante aimed at exciting men to the practice of virtue, and hoped " to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

It has lately been attempted to prove, that several works, both prior and subsequent to the age of Dante, were entirely allegorical, and composed in a secret cypher, to avoid disclosure of the principles entertained in opposition to the Court of Rome;—that Dante was himself initiated in this supposed mysterious language,* and believed he was devoting his genius exclusively to passing subjects and elaborate conceits. Were it, however, possible that he could have written a poem, abounding in sublime descriptions, and in passages of exquisite pathos, under the weight of such oppressive trammels—still, posterity will worship only the exalted Muse, which, guiding his unconscious pen, made him the instrument for rousing the noblest and most amiable sympathies of the human heart. Speculation on the various allusions embraced in so comprehensive a work may furnish an interesting employment to the curiosity of learned men; but we should never forget those sublimer qualities, which render the poet a fit companion for his immortal guide, and place the name of Dante in harmonious fellowship with that of Homer, of Shakspeare, and of Milton.

* Rossetti, Com. and Sullo Spir. Antip.

To form an idea of the construction of Dante's Hell, the reader must imagine a vast concavity or pit, reaching from the surface of the earth down to the centre, and divided into nine circles gradually diminishing in circumference. An inverted sugar loaf would represent the exterior figure; an amphitheatre would afford some idea of the interior.

The nine circles are severally appropriated to the punishment of crimes of a particular genus, and some of these are subdivided according to the different species of offences which that genus comprizes. In proportion to the magnitude of the crime, the lower is the circle allotted. Thus is contrived a graduated scale of punishment, the circles becoming more and more contracted in their circumferences, as also sinking to a greater perpendicular depth. At the very lowest point, or centre of the earth, the arch-traitor Lucifer is fixed. Dante having passed this central point, proceeds on to the antipodes, where he places his mountain of Purgatory.

ERRATA.

Canto xi. line 71, *read* " Those driven by wind, those beaten down by rain."
106, *for* " These too," *read* " These two."
xxii. 105, *for* " awhile," *read* " the while."
xxiv. 141, *for* " for this," *read* " from this."
xxx. 29, *for* " unfix'd," *read* " infix'd."
xxxi. 137, *for* " over," *read* " o'er."

Notes, Canto iii. line 37, *for* " it," *read* " upon it."
ix. 70, " and I had also," *dele* " and."
xi. 88, *for* " more severely," *read* " less severely."
xii. 97, *for* " Nessus spake," *read* " Chiron spake."
xxiii. 105, *for* " Gudenti," *read* " Gaudenti."

INFERNO.

CANTO I.

ARGUMENT.

In the midway of life Dante finds himself in a savage wilderness, within a dark valley. Attempting to make his escape, and to ascend a beautiful mountain in sight, he is opposed by three wild beasts, and driven back. He meets with Virgil, who offers to conduct him by a different road, and to show him the punishments of Hell and of Purgatory.

INFERNO.

CANTO I.

In the midway of this our life below,
I found myself within a gloomy wood,—
No traces left the path direct to show.
Alas, how painful is it to declare
The savage wildness of that forest rude,
Whose dread remembrance still renews my fear!
More bitter, scarcely death itself can be.
But, to describe the good which there I found,
I will relate what else 'twas mine to see.
How first I enter'd, it is hard to say;
In such deep slumber were my senses bound,
When from the path of truth I went astray.

But soon as I had reach'd a mountain's base,
(There, where the vale, that smote my heart with fear,
Obtain'd a limit to its dreadful space,)
I look'd on high, and saw its shoulders broad
Cloth'd with the radiance of that glorious star,
Which guideth man direct through every road.
Then was awhile allay'd the chilling fear
That still within my heart's lake trembling stood,
The night I pass'd in anguish so severe.
And like to one all breathless--who at last
Escaped ashore from out the perilous flood,
Turns to the wave, and gazing, stands aghast;
So did my mind, though still intent on flight,
Turn backward to review that vale of gloom,
Which never spared the life of mortal wight.
Soon as my weary frame had rest obtain'd,
O'er the lone coast my journey I resume;
But lowest still the firmer foot remain'd.
To climb the ascent I scarcely had essay'd,
When lo! an agile Panther barr'd my way,
Exceeding swift, in spotted coat array'd.
Confronting me, she plied her nimble feet,
And in my progress caused me such delay,
That oft I turn'd with purpose to retreat.

It was the hour when morning dawns on high,
  And now the sun was rising in the east,
  With those fair stars that bore him company,
When love divine first launch'd them in the skies:
  Thus all around with hope inspired my breast,—
  The Panther's coat that shone with varied dyes—
The season sweet—and early morning bright.
  Not, that without dismay I saw appear
  A Lion's form that burst upon my sight:
With ravening hunger, and uplifted head,
  He came against me in his fierce career:—
  Methought the very air partook of dread:
A She-Wolf too; who laden seem'd to be,
  Meagre and gaunt, with wants of every kind;
  And many a one hath brought to misery.
The terror that her countenance inspired
  So weigh'd my spirits down, that I resign'd
  All hope to reach that mountain so desired.
And e'en as one intent to swell his stores,
  When comes the hour that sweeps them all away,
  Gives up his thoughts to grief, and still deplores;
Such I became—when that insatiate brute,
  Approaching slowly, fill'd me with dismay,
  And drove me back to where the sun is mute.

While sadly I retraced my former course
  Down in the vale,—before me I descried
  One, who by long disuse of speech was hoarse.
Him in that desert vast when I survey'd—
  " Have pity, whatsoe'er thou be," I cried—
  " Or living man, or melancholy shade."
" Not man," he answer'd, " though I once was man;
  My parents were of Lombardy; and they
  In Mantua both their mortal journey ran.
Ere mighty Julius reign'd, I had my birth,
  And lived at Rome beneath Augustus' sway,
  When false and lying gods prevail'd on earth.
A bard I was, and sang that just one's fame—
  Anchises' son,—who left the Trojan shore
  When fell proud Ilion wrapt in hostile flame.
But why returnest thou to such annoy?
  Why dost thou climb yon pleasant mount no more—
  The origin and cause of every joy?"
With downcast looks I answer'd, bending low:
  " Art thou that Virgil then, that fountain clear,
  Whence streams of eloquence so richly flow?
O thou, of bards the honour and the light,
  Let my long study of thy volume dear,
  And mighty love, gain favour in thy sight.

My master thou—my author most admir'd;
To thee alone that beauteous style I owe,
Which for my name such honour hath acquired.
Behold the beast which caused me to retreat!
Protection from her wrath, great sage, bestow;
Through very fear my veins and pulses beat."
Then answer'd he, when he beheld me grieve:
" Another path by thee must be pursued,
If thou this savage wilderness wouldst leave;
For know—the beast, which fills thee with dismay,
Permits none else to journey o'er her road,
But hinders sore till she destroys her prey.
So vile her nature—so disposed to ill,
Her clamorous wants she ne'er can satisfy;
And food but serves to whet her hunger still.
She links herself to many an animal;
And till the Greyhound come, to make her die
A painful death, yet more will she enthral.
(Nor lands, nor gold shall move his lofty soul:
By wisdom, virtue, love shall he be fed;
From Feltro e'en to Feltro shall he rule.
His might Italia's lowly plains shall save,
For which Euryalus and Nisus bled,
Turnus the king, Camilla virgin brave.)

Back to the limits of her native hell,
  Whence Envy drew her first—with potent hand
  From place to place shall he the beast repel.
Wherefore, reflecting on thy future good,
  I will conduct thee from this dismal land,
  And through eternal regions guide thy road.
There shalt thou hear the cries of hopeless woe;
  There see the mournful spirits of old time,
  Imploring death to strike the second blow:
Others—in fire contented to remain:
  For hope is their's, in heaven's untroubled clime,
  Some future day an honour'd seat to gain.
But wouldst thou mount to where the blessed dwell,
  A soul more worthy shall conduct thy flight;
  Her care shall guide thee when I bid farewell:
For that all-powerful King, who rules above,
  Grants not that I, a rebel in his sight,
  Lead to his city those he may approve.
Lord of the universe—his seat is there;
  There his divine abode, and lofty throne:
  O happy he who doth his favour share!"
" Poet, I do conjure thee," I replied,
  " By that dread God whom thou hast never known,
  (So may I shun this ill and worse beside,)

Lead me, O lead me whither thou hast said 133
The gateway of Saint Peter may be view'd,
And those sad souls thou speak'st of be survey'd."
He then moved on, and I his steps pursued.

INFERNO.

CANTO II.

ARGUMENT.

After an invocation to the Muse, Dante expresses the diffidence he feels in attempting a journey which had been undertaken by such men only as Æneas and St. Paul. Virgil relieves his fears, relating how he had been sent to his assistance by Beatrice. He takes courage, and follows his guide and master towards the gate of Hell.

INFERNO.

CANTO II.

THE day was closing, and the dusky air
On all the creatures of the earth bestow'd
Rest from their labours:—I alone prepare
To struggle against pity, and to dare
A conflict with the horrors of the road,
Which an unerring memory shall declare.
O Muse, O lofty Genius, grant your aid:—
O Memory—faithful record of the past—
Be here thy true nobility display'd.

"Poet," I then began, "my honour'd guide,
O trust me not in an attempt so vast,
Until my strength and virtue have been tried.

Thy verse relateth how Æneas gain'd
  Immortal realms, while yet corruptible,
  And still in bonds of human flesh detain'd.
Nor seems it strange that God should grace bestow
  (If just discernment weigh the subject well)
  On one from whom such high effects should flow;
And that the great Opponent of all ill
  Should favour grant to one, who, He foresaw,
  Would such important destinies fulfil.
(For Heaven had erst elected him the sire
  Of Rome, ordain'd to give the nations law,—
  The hallow'd seat of blest Saint Peter's heir.)
During that journey, by thy verse made known,
  He gain'd the lore which led to victory,
  And laid the basis of the papal throne.
Next, went the chosen vessel, to convey
  Comfort to those, who on that faith rely,
  Which to salvation opens first the way.
But I—why go I there? who sanction gives?
  Æneas am not I, nor righteous Paul;
  That I am worthy, surely none believes.
If then I venture on this enterprise,
  Great is my dread in the attempt to fall:
  More need I not to say, for thou art wise."

And like to one who swerves from his intent,
Changing his purpose as fresh thoughts succeed,
Till his original design is spent;
E'en such became I on that gloomy coast;
So that my enterprise, commenced with speed,
Amid a crowd of idle thoughts was lost.
" If rightly I thy meaning understand,"
The poet of exalted soul replied,
" By coward fear thy spirit is unmann'd;
Fear—that ofttimes o'er man such terror spreads,
It makes him turn from nobler deeds aside,
Like to a steed that some dim object dreads.
From this alarm that thou may'st be relieved,
The reason of my coming I'll declare,
And what I heard when first for thee I grieved.
'Mid those in Limbo was I dwelling still,
When I was call'd by one so blest and fair,
That I entreated her to speak her will.
Her eyes shone brighter than the stars on high;
And on mine ear in her own accents fell
Tones soft and sweet of angel harmony:
' O Mantuan poet! kind and courteous soul!
Whose honour'd memory still on earth doth dwell,
And shall endure till ages cease to roll;—

A friend I have—by cruel fortune spurn'd, 61
Whose road is so obstructed o'er the plain,
That in despair his footsteps he hath turn'd:
And so bewilder'd is he, that I fear
My tardy succour will be sent in vain,
If I may judge from what in heaven I hear.
Now rise—and with thy polished words unfold 67
All that to rescue him may needful be,
And aid him so, that I may be consoled.
Know—I am Beatrice who bid thee go;
The place I left I long again to see:
Love brought me here, love makes these words to flow.
Ofttimes, when in the presence of my Lord, 73
My voice shall rise to celebrate thy praise.'
Then I resumed, as ceased the angelic word:
'O virtuous Lady, whose excelling worth
Alone hath influence mortal man to raise
O'er all the creatures that inhabit earth,—
Such my delight thy mandate to fulfil, 79
That were it done, there still would seem delay;
Seek then no further to disclose thy will;
But tell the cause—why fearless and unmoved
To this low centre thou hast won thy way,
From those high realms by thee so well beloved.'

'Since of my nature thou so much wouldst know,
To thee I briefly will reveal,' she said,
'Why undismay'd I venture here below.
Those things alone should we regard with fear,
Which bring misfortune on another's head;
All else are harmless, nor deserve our care.
Such—thanks to gracious God, have I been made,
That your calamities assail me not,
Nor do these flaming realms my peace invade.
In heaven there dwells a generous Maid, who sees
With such concern this wanderer's hapless lot,
That she prevails o'er justice' strict decrees.
She call'd on Lucia in her prayer: 'Thy friend—
Thy faithful friend, of thee now stands in need;
Him to thy grateful care do I commend.'
Lucia, to deeds of mercy ever given,
Rose at her gentle words, and came with speed
Where I with ancient Rachael sate in heaven.
'O Beatrice!' she said, 'true praise of God!
O why not succour him who loved thee so
That for thy sake he left the vulgar crowd?
Dost thou not hear his piteous cry?—nor see
The death he combats on the flood below,
Which not by ocean's rage surpass'd can be?'

Not with such haste do men on earth arise
  To compass gain, or to avert mischance,—
  As I, acquainted with his miseries,
Descended from the blest angelic choir,
  Confiding in thy winning eloquence,
  Which honours thee, and all who thee admire.'
This said—her eyes, all glistening in her tears,
  Beauteous—she turn'd; whereat my zeal increased
  To speed me hither, and relieve thy fears.
Thus at her wish I hasten'd to thine aid,
  And snatch'd thee from the fury of the beast,
  Which up the mount thy shorter road forbade.
Why linger then? what is it makes thee stay?
  Why harbour in thy breast such coward fear?
  Why o'er thy soul hath courage lost its sway?
Since three blest damsels in the court of heaven
  Watch o'er thy safety with such tender care,
  And in my words such promised help is given?"—
As drooping flowerets, closed by chilling night—
  Soon as the sun its radiance hath bestow'd,
  Uprear their heads,—and opening—hail the light;
Thus was my lagging virtue roused again;
  And to my heart such manly vigour flow'd,—
  Like one restored to freedom, I began:

" O how compassionate is she," I cried,
" Whose aid hath succour'd me! and thou how kind,
Who hast with her behest so soon complied!
Such eagerness my journey to pursue
Thy cheering accents raise within my mind,
That I with joy my first design renew.
Lead on;—one impulse doth our bosoms sway;
Thou art my guide—my master—and my lord."
I spoke;—and soon as he resumed the way,
I enter'd on the savage road abhorr'd.

INFERNO.

CANTO III.

ARGUMENT.

INSCRIPTION upon the gate of Hell. Encouraged by Virgil, Dante enters—beholds indolent and imbecile spirits, who, having lived upon earth in a state of indifference both to good and evil, are assigned the same portion as the neutral angels. The river Acheron—Charon the ferryman—a blast of lightning—Dante falls into a swoon.

INFERNO.

CANTO III.

"Through me ye enter the abode of woe: 1
Through me to endless sorrow are convey'd:
Through me amid the souls accurst ye go.
Justice did first my lofty Maker move:
By Power Almighty was my fabric made,
By highest Wisdom, and by primal Love.
Ere I was form'd, no things created were, 7
Save those eternal—I eternal last:
All hope abandon—ye who enter here."
These words, inscribed in colour dark, I saw
High on the summit of a portal vast;
Whereat I cried: "O master! with deep awe

Their sense I mark." Like one prepared he said:
"Here from thy soul must doubt be cast away;
Here must each thought of cowardice be dead.
Now to that place I told thee of, arrived,
The melancholy shades shalt thou survey,
Of God—the mind's supremest good—deprived."
Then soon as he had placed his hand on mine,
With joyful look, that bade me cease to fear,
He led my steps the hidden world within.
There sighs, and sorrows, and heart-rending cries
Resounded through the starless atmosphere,
Whence tears began to gather in mine eyes.
Harsh tongues discordant—horrible discourse—
Words of despair—fierce accents of despite—
Striking of hands—with curses deep and hoarse,
Raised a loud tumult, that unceasing whirl'd
Throughout that gloom of everlasting night,
Like to the sand by circling eddies hurl'd.
Then (horror compassing my head around)
I cried: "O master, what is this I hear?
And who are these so plunged in grief profound?"
He answer'd me: "The groans which thou hast heard
Proceed from those, who, when on earth they were,
Nor praise deserved, nor infamy incurr'd.

Here with those caitiff angels they abide,
  Who stood aloof in heaven—to God untrue,
  Yet wanting courage with his foes to side.
Heaven drove them forth, its beauty not to stain:
  And Hell refuses to receive them too:—
  From them no glory could the damn'd obtain."
"O master, what infliction do they bear,
  Which makes them raise such piercing cries?" I said.
  "That," he replied, "I will in brief declare.
These abject souls—no hope of death have they;
  And so degraded is the life they lead,
  All other states with envy they survey.
Fame is on earth denied this wretched class,
  Alike by justice and by pity spurn'd:
  Let us not speak of them—but look—and pass."
I look'd beyond, and lo! a banner rose,
  That whirling round and round so swiftly turn'd,
  Its rapid motions seem'd to scorn repose.
So large a troop of spirits came behind,
  I ne'er forsooth could have believed it true
  That death had slain such myriads of mankind.
And when I had examined many a shade,
  Behold! that abject one appear'd in view,
  Who, mean of soul, the grand refusal made.

Straight I perceived, and instant recognized,
  Before my sight, that miserable throng
  By God and by his enemies despised:
These wretches, who could ne'er be call'd alive,
  Were naked, and by wasps and hornets stung,
  Which ever and anon around them drive.
The cruel swarm bedew'd their cheeks with blood,
  Which trickled to their feet with many a tear,
  Where worms disgusting drank the mingled flood.
Then looking through the murky air, I saw
  A mighty stream, with numbers standing near;
  Whereat I said: "O master! by what law
Do these sad souls, whose state I fain would learn,
  So eagerly across the river haste,
  As by the doubtful twilight I discern?"
"These things," he answer'd me, "shall all be told
  Soon as our footsteps on the bank shall rest
  Of Acheron, that mournful river old."
Mine eyes cast down, my looks o'erwhelm'd with shame,
  Fearing my questions had oppress'd the sage,
  I spake not till beside the stream we came.
Lo! in a vessel o'er the gloomy tide
  An old man comes—his locks all white with age:—
  "Woe, woe to you, ye guilty souls!" he cried,

"Hope not that heaven shall ever bless your sight:
'Tis mine to bear you to the other shore,—
To ice, and fire, in realms of endless night.
And thou—who breathest still the vital air—
Begone, nor stay with these who live no more."
But when he saw that yet I linger'd there—
"By other ways, by other boats," said he,
"And not by this a passage must thou find;
A lighter bark than this must carry thee."
"Charon," my guide return'd, "thy wrath restrain:
Thus it is will'd where will and power are join'd;—
Therefore submit, nor question us again."
The dark lake's pilot heard;—and at the sound
Fell instant his rough cheeks, while flashing ranged
His angry eyes in flaming circles round.
But they—soon as these threatenings met their ear—
Poor, naked, weary souls—their colour changed,
And chatter'd e'en their teeth through very fear.
God they blasphemed—their parents—and of earth
The wretched habitants—their natal hour—
Their country—and the seed that gave them birth.
Then breaking forth in lamentations loud,
They gather'd close to that accursed shore
Assign'd to every one that fears not God.

Beckoning the shades with eyes of living coal,
Charon collects them all; and with his oar
Uplifted, striketh each rebellious soul.
As leaves in autumn, borne before the wind,
Fall one by one, until the naked branch
Sees all its honours to the earth consign'd;
So from that coast, at his dread signal, all
The guilty race of Adam downward launch,
Each as a bird attracted by the call.
Thus pass they o'er the gloomy waters brown,
And ere they reach the bank to which they hie,
Fresh numbers to this shore come crowding down.
"All those, my son," exclaim'd the courteous guide,
"Who in the wrath of the Almighty die,
Are gather'd here from every region wide:
Goaded by heavenly justice in its ire,
To pass the stream they rush thus hastily,
So that their fear is turn'd into desire.
By virtuous soul this wave is never cross'd;
Wherefore if Charon warn thee to depart,
The meaning of his words will not be lost."
This converse closed—the dusky region dread
Trembled so awfully, that o'er my heart
Doth terror still a chilly moisture shed.

Then, shooting forth a bright vermillion flame,
Sped from that land of tears a fearful blast,
Which all my senses instantly o'ercame :—
Prostrate I fell, like one by sleep opprest.

INFERNO.

CANTO IV.

ARGUMENT.

DANTE is roused from his slumber by a confused sound of lamentations which burst like thunder from the abyss. He follows his guide into Limbo, the first circle of Hell, where he finds the souls of those, who, though they have lived virtuously, and have not to answer for great sins, nevertheless, through lack of Baptism, may not be admitted into Paradise.

INFERNO.

CANTO IV.

Broke the deep slumber in my brain, a hoarse
And heavy thunder:—starting I awoke,
E'en like to one who is aroused by force:
And straightway rising up, around I turn
My rested eye, and gaze with stedfast look,
The place wherein I found me to discern.
Beneath me lay, in truth, the Vale of Woe,
In whose abyss eternal groans unite,
And blend their thunders in the depth below.
Obscure it was,—so cloudy—deep--and dense,
That though to pierce the gloom I strain'd my sight,
Nought could I see within the gulf immense.

" Now go we down to dusky regions blind," 13
All pale the illustrious bard began to say;
" I lead the way—do thou pursue behind."
Then I exclaim'd, of his pale looks aware,
" How shall I speed, if thou dost feel dismay,
Thou—who art wont to cheer me in despair?"
He answer'd me: " The loud laments I hear 19
From tortured souls beneath us, on my face
Pourtray that pity thou mistak'st for fear;
But let us on—for we have far to go."
Then pass'd we both within that circle's space
Which first encompasses the Vale of Woe.
No wailings there were audible,—the sound 25
Of sighs alone was heard—convulsive sighs,
That made the eternal air to tremble round.
Yet from no torture this deep sorrow flow'd,
But 'neath the weight of mental agonies,
Men—women—children sigh'd,—a countless crowd.
" Dost thou not wish to learn," my master said, 31
" What souls their sad condition here bewail?
This would I have thee know, ere thou proceed—
They sinn'd not; but the good they may have wrought,
For want of baptism, is of no avail;—
A doctrine of the faith thou hast been taught:

And if they lived ere Christ brought saving grace,
To pay to God due worship they forbore,
And I am one of this benighted race.
For these defects, and these defects alone,
Heaven have we lost;—nor do we suffer more,
Than to desire when all our hopes are gone."
Deep sorrow at his words my soul o'ercame,
For in this Limbo knew I many a wight
Once high distinguish'd in the ranks of fame.
" Tell me, my lord and master," I rejoin'd,—
" (That of the faith which error puts to flight
A full assurance might possess my mind,)—
Did spirit e'er go hence, who by his own
Or other's worth in aftertime was blest?"
And he, to whom my covert speech was known,
Gave answer: " I had lately reach'd this round,
When lo! arrived a great and glorious Guest,
Whose head with a victorious wreath was crown'd.
The soul of man's first parent hence he drew,
Abel his son, and also Noah's shade,
Moses the lawgiver; and just and true
The Patriarch Abraham: David,—Israel,
His father, and his sons that call obeyed,
And Rachael fair, whose love he earn'd so well.

For these and many others grace he gain'd:
Know—that till these with happiness were blest,
No human souls salvation e'er attain'd."
While thus he spoke, our journey we pursued,
And onward through the shadowy wood we pass'd,
The wood of souls I mean—so thick they stood.
Not far had we descended from the height,
When I observed a flame so brightly burn,
That it o'ercame the hemisphere of night.
Though we were distant still some little space,
A noble band, I partly could discern,
Inhabited this ample dwelling place.
"O glory thou of science and of art!
Say who are these, with such bright honours crown'd
That from the vulgar throng they dwell apart?"
Then answer'd he: "Their honourable fame,
Which in your world continues to resound,
Gains grace in heaven, and here exalts their name."
Meanwhile a voice exclaim'd in lofty strain:
"Let honour to the mighty bard be paid;
His shade that left us, now returns again."
Ceased had the voice—when in composed array
Four mighty shades approaching I survey'd;—
Nor joy, nor sorrow, did their looks betray.

"Him," said my gracious master, "now admire,
Who in his warlike arm uplifts a sword,—
Before the rest advancing as their sire:
Lo, this is Homer—bard surpassing all;
The next is Horace; Ovid is the third;
Lucan the last, who sang great Pompey's fall.
And since to each appropriate is the name
Which their united voice assign'd to me,
In honouring me, to them redounds the fame."
Assembled thus, was offered to my sight
The school of him, the prince of poetry,
Who eagle like o'er others takes his flight.
Apart retiring they conversed awhile;
Then beckon'd to me with a gracious sign,
Whereat my master view'd me with a smile:
And greater glory still they bade me share;
Their honourable troop they made me join—
The sixth united to such talent rare.
Thus we proceeded till we reach'd the flame,
Speaking of things I may not now recall,
However well they then the place became.
We reach'd ere long a noble castle's base,
Seven times surrounded by a lofty wall:
A beauteous streamlet flow'd around the place;

And this we pass'd as though 'twere solid land.
Through seven fair gates I went with these the Wise,
And gain'd a verdant meadow, fresh and bland.
There souls I saw, whose grave and lofty mien
Spoke dignity;—they slowly moved their eyes;
Their words were sweet, but few and far between.
Our steps aside we gently thence withdrew,
And reach'd an opening, spacious, light, and high,
Where all became apparent to our view.
There on the verdant and enamelled green
Were mighty spirits shown to me—whom I
Felt exaltation to have even seen.
I saw Electra, and could recognize
Hector, Æneas, 'mid a numerous band,
And mighty Cæsar arm'd with griffin eyes.
Penthesilea, and Camilla there
I saw conspicuous on the other hand,
And king Latinus with Lavinia fair.
Brutus, who chased proud Tarquin from the throne;
Lucretia, Julia, Marcia I survey'd,
And gallant Saladin, who sat alone.
When I had somewhat higher raised my brow,
Amid a learned company array'd,
The master of philosophy I view:

Honour'd by all—on him all eyes are cast.
Nearest, amid the sage assembly, stood
Plato and Socrates, before the rest.
Him who attributed the world to chance,
Diogenes, and Thales too I view'd;
Dioscorides, who science did advance.
There saw I Zeno, and Empedocles,
Orpheus the bard, and Seneca the wise;
With Livy, Tully, and Hippocrates,
Galieno, Avicen, and more of note:
Euclid and Ptolemy there met mine eyes,
Averroës, who the learned comment wrote.
I cannot now the names of more detail;—
Spurr'd on to haste by all I fain would say,
Full oft my pen must in description fail.
In twain the band of six divided there:
My guide conducts me by another way
Forth from the tranquil to the trembling air;
And now I came where all in darkness lay.

INFERNO.

CANTO V.

ARGUMENT.

ENTERING the second circle, Dante sees Minos, the infernal judge. He witnesses the punishment of carnal sinners, who, wrapt in darkness, are swept along by a violent hurricane. Semiramis, Dido, Helen, Paris,—Francesca of Rimini, who at Dante's request relates her misfortunes.

INFERNO.

CANTO V.

From the first circle made we our descent
Down to the second,—which, though less in size,
Holds greater grief, that bursts in loud lament.
Grinding his teeth—there Minos dreadful stands:
The culprits, as they enter in, he tries;
Awards their sentence—issues his commands.
The guilty soul confesses all its crimes,
When brought before him: then the judge decrees
Its proper place in hell: as many times
As he himself encircles with his tail,
Such is the destined number of degrees
The souls are plunged within th' infernal scale.

Crowds ever stand before him, doom'd to woe;
All in succession to the judge repair;
They speak—they hear—and then are hurled below.
"O thou, who comest to this sad abode,"
Minos exclaim'd, when he beheld me there,
His dread employ suspending—"mark thy road,
And heed thee well on whom thou dost rely:
Let not the spacious entrance tempt thee on."
To him my guide: "Why makest thou this cry?
Check not his passage, which the fates ordain:
Thus it is will'd where will and power are one;
Therefore submit—nor question us again."
Proceeding onward, I begin to hear
The melancholy sound of those who weep:—
Now, sharpest lamentations strike mine ear.
Throughout the place speaks not the light of heaven;
And the vast region bellows loud and deep,
As when o'er ocean warring winds are driven.
Th' infernal blast, unceasing in its course,
Hurries along the miserable crowd,
Whirling and tossing with resistless force.
When they arrive before the brink extreme,
There, shrieks are heard, complaint, and wailing loud;
There, God's almighty spirit they blaspheme.

Torments like these, I learnt, are here assign'd
To carnal sinners, who to appetite
Subject the nobler faculty of mind.
As starlings, ere the winter, in a vast
Innumerable squadron wheel their flight;
So, ever and anon, this sweeping blast,
Now up—now down,—this way, and that again,
Impels the wicked souls:—no comfort springs
From hope of rest, nor e'en of lessen'd pain.
As chaunting forth their melancholy lay
The clamorous cranes are borne upon their wings,
High marshalling in air their long array;—
Repeating thus their lamentable song,
Afflicted souls approaching I survey'd,
Driven by the dreadful hurricane along.
"O master, tell what race is this," I cried,
"Lash'd by the cutting wind?" "The first," he said,
"An empress reign'd o'er nations far and wide.
Her conduct such, that wishing to remove
Disgrace and shame—to wanton luxury prone,
She made her laws all license to approve:
Semiramis her name—who, as they say,
Was Ninus' wife, succeeding to his throne:
That land was her's which owns the Soldan's sway."

Then she, who slew herself for love, is seen,
And to Sichæus' memory proved untrue.
Lo Cleopatra next, luxurious queen!
Helen I view'd, for whom such years were past
Of toil and woe; the great Achilles too,
With mighty love contending at the last.
Sir Tristram, Paris, and the thousands more
Whom love had slain, he bade me then behold,
Pointing them to me, and recounting o'er.
When I had heard my sage instructor name
Those beauteous dames, and valiant knights of old,
Compassion seized on my bewilder'd frame.
"Fain would I speak, O gracious bard!" I cried,
"With those two shades together flitting there,
Who seem before the wind so light to glide."
Then he to me: "When they approach this way,
Invoke them by that love which brings them here,
And they will speedily thy call obey."
Soon as they come, swept by the hurricane,
I raise my voice: "Turn, O ye souls distrest,
And speak with us, unless some power restrain."
As doves, by strong affection urged, repair
With firm expanded wings to their sweet nest,
Borne by the impulse of their will through air;—

Thus from the band where Dido is, they sped,
Approaching lightly through that region drear;
So strong the appeal to their affection made.
" O thou benign, compassionate, and good,
Who wendest through the lurid atmosphere,
To visit us, that stain'd the earth with blood,—
Were He our friend—heav'n's mighty Potentate,
His grace should we implore in prayer for thee,
Who feelest pity for our hapless fate.
Whether to speak or list, make known thy will,
And we will speak or list accordingly,
While, e'en as now, the turbid air is still.
My native place is seated on the coast,
Where Po rolls down his waters to the sea,
And seeks in peace to blend his restless host.
Love, that in noble heart is quickly caught,
Enamour'd him of that fair form—from me
So rudely torn,—there's anguish in the thought.
Love, that permits no loved one not to love,
So ravish'd me to think of pleasing him,
That, as thou see'st, its influence still I prove.
Love caused us both to share one common tomb:
Hell's lowest depth—Caïna dark and dim
Awaits our murderer."—Thus she told her doom.

Soon as I heard their wrongs, my head I bent,
  Nor from the ground my drooping eyes retire,
  Till cried the bard: "On what art thou intent?"
When I could answer him, "Alas!" I said,
  "How sweet the thoughts—how ardent the desire
  That to the mournful step these lovers led!"—
Then turning to them, in these words I spake:
  "Thy wrongs, Francesca, make mine eyes o'erflow
  With sorrowing tears,—such pity they awake.
But tell me how, and by what sign confest,
  In that sweet time of sighs, love bade ye know
  The doubtful passion labouring in each breast?"
And she to me: "There is no greater woe,
  Than to remember days of happiness
  Amid affliction;—this thy guide doth know.
But if, how love did first our hearts beguile,
  Thou fain wouldst hear, I will the truth confess,
  As one who tells her tale, and weeps the while.
One day it chanced, for pastime we were reading
  How Lancelot to love became a prey;
  Alone we were—of evil thoughts unheeding.
Our eyes oft met together as we read;
  And from our cheeks the colour died away;
  But at one passage we were vanquishëd.

And when we read of him so deep in love,
Kissing at last the smile long time desired,
Then he, who from my side will ne'er remove,
My lips all trembling kiss'd:—well may I say
That book was Galeot—Galeot he who fired
Its glowing page:—we read no more that day."
While thus one spirit spake, so bitterly
The other wept, that all my senses fled;
A swoon came o'er me as about to die,
And prostrate on the earth I fell, as dead.

INFERNO.

CANTO VI.

ARGUMENT.

On recovering his senses, Dante finds himself in the third circle, where gluttons are punished—Cerberus barking over them, amid a continual storm of rain and snow. Ciacco recognizes Dante, and foretells the divisions with which Florence is about to be distracted. Dante proposes to his guide a question relative to the state of things after the final judgment.

INFERNO.

CANTO VI.

Soon as my mind its wonted powers renew'd, 1
Which, at the sufferings of that kindred pair,
By overwhelming sorrow were subdued;—
New torments all around me I descry;
Tormented spirits I behold, where'er
I move or turn, where'er I cast mine eye.
Now the third circle have I reach'd, where rain 7
Accursed—heavy—cold—eternal flows;
No change—no respite in this dread domain.
Dark water tumbled through the gloom profound,
With snow and hail terrific; whence arose
A noisome stench from all the putrid ground.

Cerberus, that cruel beast, devoid of form,
Stands barking, like a dog, with triple jaw,
O'er the sad souls forced downwards by the storm.
Red are his eyes, large belly he displays,
A black and greasy beard: with savage claw
He seizes on the spirits, tears, and flays.
Like whelps they howl beneath the inclement rain;
And with one side the other side defending
Oft turn themselves these wretched souls profane.
When Cerberus view'd us, as we nearer came,
Th' enormous worm, his triple mouth extending,
Show'd his huge tusks, and shook through all his frame.
My guide outstretch'd his hands, and in them both
Gather'd some earth, which, soon as he had done,
He threw within the monster's greedy mouth.
E'en as a ravenous dog, which barking loud,
Ceases, the moment that he gripes the bone,—
Impatient only to devour his food;
His filthy jaws so Cerberus ceased to use,
Who stuns the spirits with such hoarse alarms,
That they full gladly would their hearing lose.
Now o'er the shades, close pent to shun the sleet,
We took our road, and on their empty forms,
Which seem'd substantial, did we place our feet.

Stretch'd on the ground, they all recumbent lay,
Save one, who from his seat uprose in haste,
As soon as he beheld us pass that way.
" O thou who visitest these realms," he said,
" Recall me to thy memory, if thou mayst,
For thou wert born before my spirit fled."
" The pain thou sufferest doth perhaps erase
Thy form," I said, " so wholly from my mind,
That it appears I ne'er beheld thy face:
But tell me who thou art, thus sadly thrust
Within this place of woe;—though one may find
Pangs more intense, yet none can more disgust."
" Thy city," answer'd he, " where envy base
O'erflows all bounds that would its force restrain,
In life's sweet season was my dwelling place.
Ye, O my citizens, to mark my taste,
Erst named me Ciacco: here amid the rain
For gluttony thou see'st my body waste:
Nor I alone am miserable here;—
All these unhappy souls, condemn'd to smart
For like offences, like affliction share."
" O Ciacco," I replied, " thy misery
So weighs me down, it makes the tears to start:
But tell me, if thou knowest, what will be

Attempted in the factious city next? 61
Can any just one there be found? and tell,
Why by such fearful discord it is vext?"
"After long struggle, blood," he said, "shall flow;
The woodland party shall at last prevail,
And with dire slaughter chase away their foe.
Yet, ere three years are past, shall fall their pride; 67
The other shall prove victor, by his aid
Who now cajoling, flatters either side.
Long time shall these their foreheads lift on high,
And hold the others down in bondage dread,
Though fierce their rage, and pitiful their cry.
Two just ones are there, but unheard their call;— 73
Envy, and Pride, and Avarice combine—
Three fatal sparks—to fire the hearts of all."
Here ended he his lamentable strain.
Then I: "More knowledge to impart be thine,
And farther converse I entreat thee deign.
Tegghiaio, and Farinata, names of worth, 79
And Rusticucci, Mosca, with the rest
Who bent their minds to working good on earth—
Say where they are, in answer to my prayers;
And tell, to satisfy my longing breast,
If bliss in heaven, or woe in hell is theirs."

" 'Mid blacker souls," he said, "they're doom'd to dwell;
If thou descend, for crimes of various dye
Thou wilt behold them buried deep in hell.
But when to the sweet world thou shalt return,
I pray thee to revive my memory:
No more I say;—no more seek thou to learn."
His stedfast eyes askance he then inclined;—
A moment gazed on me,—then bent his head,
And falling, join'd his other comrades blind.
" Ne'er shall he rise again," the master said,
" Till, when the power of vengeance is display'd,
Th' angelic trumpet wake him from the dead.
Each soul shall then regain its mournful tomb;
Each shall its flesh and pristine form resume,
And hear pronounced the everlasting doom."
O'er rain and shadows thus we took our road—
A mixture foul;—and on the life to come
Some converse, journeying forward, we bestow'd:
When I: " O master, will these pangs be made
More sharp, when sentence hath been past by heaven,
Or lessen'd, or remain thus fierce?" He said:
" Remember, that the nearer each attains
A perfect state, a finer sense is given
To thrill with pleasures or to throb with pains.

Though true perfection never can be theirs,
  Yet for this race accurst, in misery bound,
  Heav'n, after judgment, worthier doom prepares."
Then speaking more than to repeat I care,
  We made a circuit that sad coast around;
  We reach'd the point, whence downward leads the stair,
And Plutus there, the mighty foe, we found.

INFERNO.

CANTO VII.

ARGUMENT.

At the entrance of the fourth circle, Plutus endeavours to terrify Dante, but is silenced by Virgil. Punishment of the avaricious and prodigal, who roll great stones round the circle in opposite directions, and, when they meet, clash violently, upbraiding each other. Hence Virgil takes occasion to speak of fortune, and the fickleness of earthly possessions. They enter the fifth circle, where the wrathful and gloomy are tormented in the lake of Styx.

INFERNO.

CANTO VII.

"PAPE Satan, Pape Satan Aleppe," cried
The voice of Plutus, thundering loud and hoarse;
Whereat, apprized of all, my sapient guide
Exclaim'd, to comfort me: "Let not dismay
Confound thy senses, for his utmost force
Shall nought avail to check thy downward way."
Then turning round: "Be silent, wolf accurst,"
He sternly said to that swoll'n lip abhorr'd;
"And let thy furious rage within thee burst.
Not without sanction we descend below;—
For thus 'tis will'd on high, where Michael's sword
On the proud rebels struck the vengeful blow."

As sweeping round, when sudden cracks the mast,
Sails bellying with the wind come headlong down;
So quickly fell to earth the monster vast.
To the fourth circle thus we made descent,
Still gaining on that mournful bank of stone,
In which the ills of all the world are pent.
Justice divine! of the dire toils I saw,
And novel punishments, oh! who can speak?—
Why bring we on ourselves such fearful law?
As rising o'er Charybdis' rocky height
Waves meeting waves in dreadful conflict break,
Thus whirling round, these souls are doom'd to fight.
Elsewhere I saw not such a numerous crowd:—
Enormous weights they with their breasts impell'd
From side to side, nor ceased to yell aloud.
Clashing they met:—then turn'd; and harsh abuse
Each on the other pouring, fiercely rail'd:
"Thou, why so niggard?" "Thou, why so profuse?"
Round the dark circle till they met again,
Thus they pursued their course on either hand,
Vociferating still their taunting strain.
Midway arriving—to renew the fight,
Back o'er the semicircle turns each band:
And I, whose heart was stricken at the sight,

Exclaim'd: "O thou, my master, tell, I pray,
What race is this? and these upon the left
With closely shaven heads—all priests were they?"
To me he said: "All these before thy view,
Whilst upon earth, of reason were so reft,
No medium in the use of wealth they knew.
This by their words is clearly proved, each time
They meet, as round the circle they repair,
Parting anon—so opposite their crime.
Priests once, both Popes and Cardinals were they,
Whose heads uncover'd are devoid of hair;
O'er them foul avarice held unbounded sway."
"Amid so many, master," I replied,
"I surely ought to recognize some few,
Who, when alive, were with these vices dyed."
Then he: "Thou hast devised a project vain;—
Since that inglorious life, which now they rue,
Permitteth none to know them here again.
For ever will they clash with double shocks;—
These from the grave with clenched hands shall rise;
And these appear again with shaven locks.
From the fair world excluded, thus they fight,—
Due recompense for waste and avarice:
Words need I not to paint their evil plight.

Now see the gifts to Fortune's care consign'd;—
  How swift, my son, how variable their gale,—
  Sought with such anxious labour by mankind:
For all the gold that is beneath the moon,
  Or all that ever was, could not avail
  These weary souls, nor purchase rest for one."
" Tell me," I said, " O master, if thou may'st,—
  This Fortune, that thou speak'st of, what is she,
  In whose control all worldly goods are placed?"
Then answer'd he: " O creatures weak and blind,
  How led astray by ignorance are ye!
  Now let my maxims sink into thy mind.
He, whose transcendent wisdom hath no bound,
  Fashion'd the heavens, and gave to them a guide;
  Distributing an equal light around,
So that each part to other part might shine:
  And thus o'er earthly splendours to preside
  A ministering power did he assign,
To deal life's fleeting goods with varying hand;
  And, spite th' impediments of human skill,
  To change from race to race, from land to land:
Hence is it, that the nations fall or rise,
  Obedient to her all-controlling will,
  Who, like a snake, conceal'd in herbage lies.

In vain 'gainst her your earthly wisdom vies;
With foresight and with judgment she maintains
Her destined sway, like other Deities.
Her changes have no rest—for ever new:
To speed her on, Necessity constrains;
And hence vicissitudes so oft ensue.
And she it is, on whose devoted head
Are heap'd such vile reproach and calumny
By those whose praise she rather merited.
But she is blest, and hears not what they say;
With other primal beings, joyously
She rolls her sphere, exulting on her way.—
Now go we down to realms of greater pain:
Each star, which at my outset was ascending,
Is sinking, and forbids us to remain."
We cross'd the circle to the other side,
Above a boiling fount our footsteps bending,
From whence a sluice convey'd the gushing tide.
More dark than purple was that water's flow;
And we beside the mournful river dun
Proceeded by a rugged path below:
A lake is form'd (the Stygian named of old)
By this sad stream, when downward it hath run
'Neath the grey rocks that hem the baleful hold.

Wondering I stood, and saw within the lake
A crew all naked, and in mud immers'd,
Whose threatening looks their inward rage bespake.
Not with their hands alone fierce blows they lent,
But with the head, the feet, and breast accurst,
And with the teeth, themselves they piecemeal rent.
" My son," the gracious master said, " behold
The shades of those who were o'ercome by wrath,
And give belief to what I now unfold.
Beneath the stream are souls that utter sighs,
From whence such frequent bubbles issue forth,
As may be seen where'er you cast your eyes.
Deep fix'd in mud, ' Sad were we,' they exclaim,
' There, where the sun sends forth his gladsome ray,
Bearing within a foul and smother'd flame;
Sad are we now within this filthy lake.'
They gurgle in their throats this dismal lay,
Since utterance more distinct they cannot make."
Thus circling round the noisome pool we went,
Between the centre and the solid shore,
On those who drank the mud our sight intent:
At last we came before a lofty tower.

INFERNO.

CANTO VIII.

ARGUMENT.

In answer to a signal from the tower, Flegias, the ferryman of the lake, speedily crosses it, and conveys Virgil and Dante to the other side. On their passage they meet with Filippo Argenti, who is immersed by his companions in the lake. They arrive at the city of Dis. Their entrance disputed by a numerous band of Demons, who close the gates against them.

INFERNO.

CANTO VIII.

ERE we had reach'd the lofty castle's base
(My wondrous history I here renew)
Our eyes were raised, upon its top to trace
Two little flames, which there were seen to rise;
Another answer'd, so remote to view,
We scarce discern'd the glimmer with our eyes.
Then to the sea of knowledge turn'd,—I said:
"Wherefore this signal? why that answering light?
And who are they by whom these flames are fed?"
"What now advances o'er the gloomy tide,
Is surely," he exclaim'd, "within thy sight,
Unless indeed the marshy vapours hide."

With greater speed did never arrow fly
Forth from the string, and cut the yielding air,
Than, o'er the stream approaching, met mine eye
A little bark, that skimm'd along in haste,
Steer'd by a single boatman; who, aware,
Cried out: "Fell soul, art thou arrived at last?"
"Flegias, Flegias, the outcry thou dost make
For once avails thee not," exclaim'd the sire;
"We stay not with thee but to cross the lake."
As one, who hearing some egregious fraud
Practised upon him, gives his soul to ire;
So Flegias stood enraged before my lord.
Into the boat descended then the guide,
And, as he enter'd, bade me follow too:
Till I embark'd no burden press'd the tide.
Soon as we both were seated in the punt,
Away it went;—and with its ancient prow
Cut the black wave more deeply than 'twas wont:
Whilst we were hurrying o'er the stagnant slime,
One rose before me, smear'd with mud, and cried:
"Say who art thou who com'st before thy time?"
"I come not to remain:—but who," quoth I,
"Art thou who hast thyself so brutified?"
"Lo! one I am who weeps," was his reply.

And I to him: "With weeping and with woe,
Thy fitting company, cursed soul, remain;—
All muddy though thou art, thy face I know."
Then to the boat his hands in rage were thrown:
Whereat the master drove him back again,
Exclaiming: "To the other dogs begone."
Around my neck his loving arms he flung,
And kiss'd my cheek: "Indignant soul," said he,
"How blest the mother from whose womb you sprung.
He, when alive, was arrogant, and proud;
No deed of goodness decks his memory;
Therefore his shade assumes this furious mood.
On earth how many deem themselves great kings,
Who here like swine shall wallow in a sty,
And leave a name that vile remembrance brings!"
"O what delight would it afford my heart
To see him plunged within the pool," said I,
"Ere from the filthy waters we depart!"
Then he to me: "Thou shalt be satisfied,
Before the infernal shore appear in sight;
'Tis meet that such a wish be not denied."
Soon after, I beheld the muddy crew
Set on him with such violence and might,
That God I thank for granting me the view.

"Down with Argenti!" shouted one and all; 61
And with his teeth his savage wrath to vent,
Himself this furious Florentine did maul:
We journied on,—so him no more I name.
Then smote mine ear a loud and shrill lament,
Whereat I stretch'd mine eye to whence it came.
"Behold, my son," to me the master cried, 67
"We now draw near the city named of Dis,
Where crowds of wretched citizens reside."
"Master," quoth I, "already I discern
Its bright vermillion mosques in the abyss,
Which, as in furnace heated, seem to burn."
"The fire," he said, "that glows eternally 73
Within the walls, that ruddy hue supplies,
Which in the infernal valley thou may'st see."
Then we arrived within the trench profound
That compasseth this wretched land of sighs;
And framed of iron seem'd the walls around.
A tedious circuit made, at last we came 79
Where, "Lo the entrance—quit ye now the boat,"—
We heard the pilot's thundering voice exclaim.
More than a thousand on the gates I spied,
Rain'd down from heaven;—disdainfully they shout:
"Say who is this, that (death's dread power untried)

Stalks through the dusky regions of the dead?"
His wish for secret conference to show,
My sapient guide to them a signal made.
Their mighty wrath they somewhat then forbare;
"Come thou alone," they said, "and let him go
Who so audaciously hath enter'd here;
Let him retrace his foolish steps again,
With none to lead him through this darksome land,
For thou his escort shalt with us remain."
Think, reader, how disconsolate was I,
Hearing the malice that their words contain'd:—
I thought I never should return on high.
"O thou, dear guide, who safety hast bestow'd
Sev'n times at least, and borne me scathless through,
When direst peril hath beset my road—
O leave me not," I said, "in this dismay;
And if such dreaded obstacles ensue,
Together let us speed our backward way."
Then answer'd he—my kind and faithful guide:
"Fear not, for none a passage can deny,
By One so potent is our strength supplied:
Wait my return, and feed thy heavy sprite
With goodly hope;—for be assured that I
Will ne'er desert thee in these realms of night."

He thus departs.—Abandon'd by my friend,
Alone I stand in sorrowful suspense,
While no and yes within my heart contend:
Nor could I aught distinguish what he said;
But scarce had he begun a conference,
When back within the walls they quickly sped.
Against my master's breast our enemy
The portals closed:—shut out—he came away,
With tardy footsteps turning back to me.
Downward his eyes were bent, and from his brow
All boldness gone; in sighs he seem'd to say,
"Who hath denied me these abodes of woe?"
He then address'd me: "Be not thou afraid
At this my wrath; our way shall still be won,
Whate'er resistance may within be made:
Not we the first their insolence to prove;
For erst at a less secret gate 'twas shown,
Which, now unbarr'd, thou hast beheld above:
Its deadly words engraved thou didst descry.
Already passing through the circles vast,
One cometh unescorted from on high,
By whose assistance shall the gate be past."

INFERNO.

CANTO IX.

ARGUMENT.

DANTE, alarmed at some doubts expressed by Virgil as to their success in forcing an entrance into the city of Dis, is comforted by the assurance of his guide, that he has been the road before, and knows it well. Appearance of the furies. An angel sent from heaven opens the gate of the city. The poets enter, and find it full of tombs intensely heated by fire, in which are punished the Arch-heretics.

INFERNO.

CANTO IX.

That hue, which coward fear spread o'er my face
When I beheld my master backward turn,
Caused him his own emotion to repress.
As one who listens, he attentive stood;
For with his eye he could not far discern
Through the black air, and through the heavy cloud.
He then began: "To triumph in this fight
Behoves us still: unless . . . such mighty aid . . .
Oh! would that he already were in sight!"
Full well I saw his closing words convey'd
A sense at variance with what first he said,
And fain would cloak the doubts he had betray'd:

Nathless, his speech much fear within me wrought,
For haply from his broken words I drew
Worse meaning than they really did import.
" Down from that circle of the dread abyss
Where loss of hope alone the spirits rue,
Doth any e'er descend so low as this?"
I made inquiry; and he answer'd thus:
" It rarely happens that the road I go
Hath e'er been ventured on by one of us.
'Tis true, aforetime I have been this track,
By fell Erichtho conjured down below,
Who to their bodies call'd the spirits back.
Short space had I put off my mortal clay,
When, to the circle which base Judas holds,
She sent me down, to bear a soul away:
That is the lowest place and most obscure,
And farthest from the heaven which all enfolds:
I know the road—feel therefore thou secure.
This marsh, whence vapours rise so foul and rife,
Surrounds that mournful city, which denies
All entrance, save with bitterness and strife."
And more he said than memory can recite;
With such deep fix'd attention were mine eyes
Drawn to the castle of the flaming light:—

There, on a sudden rising up, I view'd
Three hellish furies:—stain'd with blood they were,
And female seem'd their limbs and attitude;
Green hydras twined their hideous waists around;
And serpents and cerastes form'd the hair,
Whose mantling coils their savage temples bound.
Then he, who knew the horrid beldames well,
Attendant on the queen of endless woe,
Exclaim'd to me: "Behold the Erynnis fell:
This is Megæra on the left; the dread
Aletto weeps upon the right; and lo!
Between them stands Tisiphone:" he said
No more. Each with her nails sore rent her breast;
Struck with her hands; and shriek'd in such despite,
That to the bard I clung, with fear opprest.
"Haste, bring Medusa—change him into stone,"
All cried, as they look'd downward from the height;
"This comes of favour unto Theseus shown."
"Turn back, and from the Gorgon hide thine eyes;
For shouldst thou look on her, whom none withstands,
Vain were the hope again to view the skies."
Thus as the master spake, he sudden wheel'd
My body round, nor trusted to my hands,
But with his own my countenance conceal'd.

O ye, with lofty intellects endow'd,
  Behold the secret lore intended here,
  Which my mysterious minstrelsy would shroud.
Now o'er the restless waves there came a sound
  As of a mighty crashing—fraught with fear,
  Which shook both shores throughout the vast profound;
Like to the raging of a mighty wind,
  Which, rushing swift to cool some fervid zone,
  Shatters the wood; and sweeping unconfined
Tears off the boughs, beats down, and hurls away;—
  In clouds of dust advances proudly on,
  And fills the beasts and shepherds with dismay.
He loosed my eyes, and, "Let their energies
  Be turn'd," he said, "high o'er that ancient scum,
  There, where the most offensive vapours rise."
As frogs before the hostile serpent fly
  Swift through the water, till to land they come,
  And each is buried in the mud;—so I
Above a thousand ruin'd souls survey'd
  Fleeing from One, who o'er the Stygian pass,
  With feet unmoisten'd, had his passage made.
His left hand oft in front was seen to wave,
  The heavy air removing from his face;
  And this the sole fatigue he seem'd to have.

Heaven's messenger he was, I plainly saw,
And to the master turn'd; whereat he straight
Made sign that I should bend in silent awe.
Ah! what disdain, methought, his looks disclosed!
Touch'd by his potent wand, the hostile gate
Flew instant open, nor his will opposed.
"Outcasts of heaven!—O abject race!" he cried,
Upon the horrid threshold as he stood,
"Whence in you dwells this insolence and pride?
Why do ye kick against the heavenly will,
Which never fails to make its purpose good,
And oft hath caused you an increase of ill?
What profits it 'gainst fate to butt the horn?—
Think how your Cerberus was overthrown,
And how his jaw and gullet still are torn."
Then back he turn'd along the filthy shore,
Nor spoke to us; but seem'd e'en like to one
By other care opprest and troubled more
Than by the thought of him within his view.
Fired by the hallow'd words, with footstep bold,
And firm assurance, we our way pursue.
The city then we enter'd unopposed:
And I, who was desirous to behold
The state of those by such strong walls enclosed,

Soon as I enter'd, cast around mine eyes.
On every side a spacious district lay,
Replete with torment, and with miseries.
And as at Arles, where Rhone scarce seems to glide;—
And as at Pola, near Quanaro's bay,
(Which bounding fair Italia laves her side,)
Tombs thickly spread diversify the ground;
E'en so vast tombs, resembling these I see
Save in the horrors which here more abound;
For scatter'd mid the graves were flames of fire,
Which heated them to such intense degree,
That hotter iron no craft could e'er require.
Their lids hung over them; and forth arose
Such dreadful lamentations, as declared
How they who utter'd them were rack'd by throes.
Then I: "O master, say what souls are here,
Who thus within these fiery vaults interr'd
Their voices raise in sighs of deep despair?"
"Here, with their followers of each sect," he said,
"Dwell the Arch-heretics, a concourse vast;
More than thou thinkest in the tombs are laid.
These monuments have less or greater heat;
Together buried, like with like are class'd."
And then, as to the right I turn'd my feet,
Between the tombs and ramparts high we pass'd.

INFERNO.

CANTO X.

ARGUMENT.

DANTE passes among the tombs of the Heretics, and converses with Farinata and Cavalcanti. The former predicts his exile from Florence.

INFERNO.

CANTO X.

Now by a path that was confined and rude,
Between the tombs and wall that girds the plain,
My master went—and I his steps pursued.
"Virtue supreme!" I then began, "O thou
Who guidest me throughout these realms of pain!—
Speak, and inform me what I wish to know.
The spirits in these sepulchres who lie—
May they be seen?—their lids, as I discern,
E'en now are raised, and none to guard are nigh."
"All will be fasten'd down," the bard replied,
"When from Jehosaphat they shall return
Clothed in the bodies they have laid aside.

" Here Epicurus hath his fiery tomb,
And with him all his followers, who maintain
That soul and body share one common doom.
Wherefore within this place, to the request
Thou hast made known, an answer shalt thou gain;
And likewise to the wish thou hast suppress'd."
Then I: " From thee I ne'er conceal a thought,
Unless, dear guide, to shorten what I say;—
A lesson thou thyself hast lately taught."
" Tuscan, who through this city fraught with fire,
Speaking so modestly, dost wend thy way,—
Here may it please thee stay at my desire.
Thy words full clearly make it manifest
Thou art a native of that noble land,
Which I perhaps too sorely did molest:"
Sudden from out a vault, upon mine ear
These accents burst; whereat I took my stand
Still nearer to my master's side, through fear.
And he exclaim'd: "Turn round; what would'st thou do?
Lo Farinata!—upwards from the waist
His form behold, apparent to thy view."
Already on his face my eyesight fell;
And he uprear'd his forehead and his breast,
As if he felt supreme contempt for Hell.

Towards him, with prompt and animated hand,
  My guide among the tombs impell'd me on;
  And said—" Speak clear, that he may understand."
When nearer to the sepulchre I came,
  He gazed awhile;—anon in haughty tone
  Exclaim'd: "Who were thine ancestors?" Their name,
Full anxious to obey, I let him know,
  And gladly told him who my fathers were:
  At which incensed, he somewhat raised his brow:
" To me, and mine, and to my party, erst
  So fierce," he said, " the hatred which they bare,
  That more than once their forces I dispersed."
" Though vanquish'd, still they fear'd not to return
  Each time," quoth I, " from every part again;—
  A happy art which thine have fail'd to learn."
Then at his side another shade arose,
  Of whom no more than to the chin was seen;
  (Upon his knees he rested, I suppose.)
He look'd around me, e'en as if he sought
  Another in my company to find;
  But, when he saw how vain the pleasing thought,
Weeping he said: " If lofty genius be
  Thy passport hither through this prison blind—
  Where is my son? why comes he not with thee?"

I answer'd him: "I come not here alone: 61
Lo! yonder is my faithful escort, whom
Guido thy son perhaps had scorn'd to own."
(Already was made known to me his name,
Both by his words, and his appropriate doom;
Whence from my lips so full an answer came.)
Then on a sudden starting up—he cries, 67
"Had! didst thou tell me?—ceases he to live?—
Strikes not the genial light upon his eyes?"
When he observed a short delay ensue,
Ere I an answer to his speech could give,
Supine he fell, nor more appear'd to view.
But he—that noble and exalted shade 73
Who bade me stay, changed not his look the while—
Bent not his either side, nor moved his head:
"And if," continuing his speech, he said,
"The art thou speak'st of, they have learnt so ill,
That more torments me than this fiery bed.
But the fair Lady, who here beareth sway, 79
Not fifty times her silver face shall light,
Ere thou wilt know how much that art doth weigh.
And mayst thou see the beauteous world again,
As thou acquaint me why, my friends to spite,
Such cruel laws your people still retain."

"The rout," I said, "and dreadful carnage made,
When Arbia's stream ran purple to the sea,
Tell why such vows are in our temples paid."
Then sighing mournfully, his head he shook;
"Not singly mix'd I in that fray," said he,
"Nor without cause such part with others took.
But when assembled numbers had decreed
To sweep fair Florence from the earth away,
My voice alone was raised against the deed."
"So by thine offspring may repose be found,
As thou unravelest" (thus to him I pray)
"The knot in which my intellect is bound.
Future events, ere time may yet unfold,
It seems ye can foretel, if right I learn;—
Unable what is present to behold."
"Like one who hath a weak and failing sight,
Objects remote," he answer'd, "we discern;—
The mighty God imparteth still such light:
When they are present, or approach—all vain
Our reason proves; nor of your mortal state,
Except from others, can we knowledge gain.
Now therefore mayst thou fully comprehend,
When once is closed futurity's dark gate,
All our intelligence will have an end."

Then with compunction smitten, as it were,
I said: "Inform that fallen one, I pray,
That still his Guido breathes the vital air.
And if from answer I at first refrain'd,
Tell him, my erring thoughts were led astray,
Pondering on that which thou hast now explain'd."
Then with more haste I press'd him to relate
(For Virgil's summons fell upon mine ear)
What shades partook of his unhappy fate.
"Here with above a thousand souls I lie:
Here is the second Frederick, and here
The Cardinal: the others I pass by."
This said, he vanish'd. Not without alarm
I turn'd me to the ancient bard again,
Musing on what to me portended harm.
Onward he moved, and, as he went, inquired:
"What is it thus bewildereth thy brain?"
And I reveal'd the cause, as he desired.
"What thou hast heard of evils that impend,
Store in thy memory," the poet said;
"And now" (his finger he upraised) "attend:—
When thou shalt stand before her heavenly ray,
Whose beauteous eyes through all extent pervade,
She shall inform thee of thy future way."

Then turning to the left my guide proceeds. 133
Leaving the wall, on towards the gulf we went
Along a path that to a valley leads,
Which e'en to us its noisome vapour sent.

INFERNO.

CANTO XI.

ARGUMENT.

ARRIVING at the verge of the seventh circle, in which are punished the heretics, Dante sees the sepulchre of Pope Anastasius. Here, taking shelter awhile from the horrible stench that rose from the abyss, he is instructed by Virgil in the divisions of the next three circles, in which are contained the violent, the fraudulent, and the usurious.

INFERNO.

CANTO XI.

High on a bank's extremest verge we stood,
  Where stones enormous form'd a precipice,
  Whence greater agony beneath we view'd.
And here to such excess was prevalent
  The horrid fume which rose from the abyss,
  That we withdrew behind a monument
Whose lid gave shelter, and whereon I read
  Inscribed:—" Pope Anastasius I contain,
  Whom from the path direct Photinus led."
" Now it behoves us slowly to descend,
  That by degress our sense we may constrain
  To bear the stench, that will no more offend."

Thus spake my guide. "Lest time be idly spent,
Do thou," I said, "some compensation find."
"On that," he answer'd, "are my thoughts intent.
Within these rocks, my son, I'd have thee know,
Three lesser circles in gradation wind,
E'en like to those which thou art leaving now.
Fill'd are they all with souls accurst for aye;
But that the sight of them may hence suffice,
Hear how and why imprison'd thus they lie.
Of every malice that in heaven's abhorr'd,
The aim is injury; and all such vice
Brings grief to others, or by force or fraud.
But as deceit is man's peculiar stain,
God hates it most; hence those who use deceit
Are placed below, and rack'd by greater pain.
With those to violence prone this space abounds;
But since in threefold mode men practise it,
The circle is disposed in triple rounds.
Against our God—ourselves—our neighbours—force
Is exercised; 'gainst them and what belongs
To them I mean, as shall be proved in course.
By force and painful wounds may death be brought
Upon our neighbour, and may grievous wrongs
By fire and rapine on his goods be wrought.

Hence murderers, and all with violent hands,
  Spoilers and robbers, each in the first round
  Their torment find, arranged in various bands.
Against himself man may be violent,
  And his possessions; wherefore each is found
  Within the second circle, penitent
In vain, whoever doth his life destroy,
  And wastes the substance for his use supplied;—
  Grieving, where all was given him to enjoy.
Force may be offer'd to the Deity,
  When he is cursed and in the heart denied,
  And nature's goodness held in contumely:
Wherefore the lesser circle sets its seal
  On Sodom and on Cahors, and on each
  Who for his God no reverence doth feel.
Fraud—whence to every breast remorse ensues—
  Man uses, when he tries to overreach
  Or him who trusteth, or doth trust refuse.
This latter mode appears to cut in twain
  The bond of social love which nature ties;
  Whence to the second circle appertain
Witchcraft, hypocrisy, and flattery,
  Falsehood, with secret theft, and simonies;
  Whoremongers, barterers, and such infamy.

The other mode breaks nature's bond of love, 61
As well as that, which added unto this
The source of special confidence doth prove.
Hence in the minor circle (where is placed
The centre of the world and seat of Dis)
Each traitor is for ever doom'd to waste."
Then I replied: " Thy argument is clear, 67
And is full well adapted to explain
This gulf profound, and all in torment here.
But tell me,—those within the muddy marsh,
Driv'n by the wind,—those beaten by the rain,—
And those who meeting use such language harsh—
Tell me,—within the city fraught with fire, 73
If God is wrath, why not consumed are they?
Or else, why are they in such penance dire?"
" Wherefore from its accustom'd seat," he said,
" Wanders thy intellect so far astray?
Or to what other object hath it fled?
Dost thou forget thine ethics, where is given 79
A treatise on the crimes that cause offence
More than all others to the King of Heaven—
Incontinence—and bestiality—
With malice foul?—and how incontinence
Is less offensive to the Deity?

If thou considerest this sentence well,
And duly callest to thy memory
Those who without, in deep repentance, dwell,
Soon wilt thou see why from these shades of guilt
They are remov'd; and why a less degree
Of punishment hath heavenly justice dealt."
O sun, that healest all distemper'd sight,
Such joy I feel when clouds thou hast dispers'd,
That doubt no less than knowledge gives delight!
" Turn thee,"—quoth I,—" a little back again
To where, thou said'st, the usurer dwells accurst,
And why he God offendeth, now explain."
" To him," he said, " who rightly marks the sense,
Philosophy not once alone hath told
How clearly, from Divine Intelligence,
Nature derives the knowledge of ner course:
And thou wilt find, ere turning many a fold,
(If well thou note thy physical discourse,)
That as the youth obeys his master's nod,
E'en so is nature's path pursued by art:
Thus art is second in descent from God.
These too, if Genesis thou call to mind,
Should wisdom in the ways of life impart,
And man instruct to benefit his kind.

But since the usurer works by other ways,
  Daring both art and nature to despise,
  Towards his Maker he contempt betrays.
But let us on,—for twinkling in the east
  High in the welkin now the Pisces rise;
  O'er Caurus, Charles's Wain appears to rest,
And far the steep descent in prospect lies.

INFERNO.

CANTO XII.

ARGUMENT.

DESCENT into the seventh circle, guarded by the Minotaur. Those who have done violence to their neighbour are tormented in a river of blood; and when they endeavour to escape, are shot at by a troop of Centaurs. Three of these latter oppose the progress of the Poets, but are appeased by Virgil; and Nessus is prevailed upon to carry Dante across the stream.

INFERNO.

CANTO XII.

Rough was the stair we came to, and there lay
Upon the brink such object terrible
As every eye would shudder to survey.
Like to the cliff, which, or by earthquake riven,
Or wanting prop, on this side Trento fell,
Down into Adicë with ruin driven,
So that, dissever'd by the mighty shock,
E'en from the summit to the bottom, it
Affords no road to one upon the rock,—
So rough and rugged was this dread descent:
And prostrate lay before the broken pit,
The shame of Crete, in all his foul extent,

Who in the fictious heifer was conceived:
  And when he saw us come, himself he bit,
  Like one whose breast with inward rage is heaved.
Him in these words my sapient guide address'd:
  " The Duke of Athens here thou think'st, I trow,
  Who erst on earth thy violence laid to rest:
Begone, foul beast—for he before thy sight
  Comes not instructed by thy sister now,
  But hither wends to view thy wretched plight."
E'en as a bull springs up in wild despair
  The instant he receives the mortal blow,—
  Nor yet moves on, but staggers here and there;
So did the Minotaur impetuous leap.
  My guide aware, cried: " To the pass retreat;
  And while he storms, do thou descend the steep."
Thus we proceeded down the rocky height
  O'er broken fragments, which beneath my feet
  Ofttimes gave way at such unusual weight.
Musing I went; then said he: " Haply thou
  Art pondering on the ruin, guarded well
  By that brute rage which I have vanquish'd now.
Know that when heretofore I made descent
  Hence downward to the lower depth of hell,
  This rock was not from its foundation rent.

It fell, if right I judge, but just before
His coming dread, who from the round above,
Despoiling Dis, the mighty booty bore.
Trembling throughout—the infernal valley heaved
So fearfully, that I supposed with love
The universe was seized; which, 'tis believed,
Hath oftentimes to chaos turn'd the world:
Then was this aged rock with that turmoil,
Both here and elsewhere, into ruins hurl'd.
But fix thine eyes below; for near us run
Those bloody waves, in which the spirits boil
Who harm to others have by violence done."
O blind desire! O foolish wrath, that so
Dost spur us onward in our short-lived race,
And then for ever plungest us in woe!
An ample trench, capacious, I survey'd,
Curved in a bow, that so it might embrace
The plain around, e'en as my guide had said.
Betwixt the bank and it (a narrow space)
Ran Centaurs, one by one, with shafts in hand,
As erst on earth they issued to the chase.
Perceiving us, they all their course restrain'd,
While three advanced, dividing from the band,
With bows and winged arrows first obtain'd.

And one cried out from far: "Ye who descend— 61
What penance come ye hither to receive?
Tell me,—but stir not, or the bow I bend."
My master said: "The answer you desire,
From whence we are, to Chiron will we give:
Your mind was ever ready to take fire."
He touch'd me then, and spake: "Lo Nessus, who 67
For beautiful Deianira died,
And in his death took vengeance on his foe.
He in the centre, looking on his breast,
Is Chiron, of Achilles' youth the guide:
The other Pholus, by such wrath possess'd.
Thousands by thousands round the foss they flit, 73
And dart their arrows at each soul they watch
Emerging higher than his crimes admit."
Then to those rapid beasts we nearer drew:
Chiron an arrow took, and with the notch
His shaggy beard behind the cheekbone threw:
And when his mouth enormous thus was shown, 79
His comrades he address'd: "Are ye aware
That he behind, moves what he treads upon?—
Not this the case, I ween, with spirits' feet."
Then said my faithful guide (who now was near
His ample breast, where both the natures meet):

"He lives indeed, but in such lonely plight,
I needs must lead him through the valley blind;
Necessity compels him—not delight.
She ceased awhile her hallow'd songs on high,
Who to my care this new employ consign'd:
No robber he—nor felon soul am I.
But by that virtue, at whose high command
I make my journey o'er so rough a track—
Assign, I pray thee, one from out thy band
To show the ford across this bloody tide,
And carry o'er my comrade on his back:—
He is no spirit through the air to ride."
Then, to the right inclining, Chiron spake:
"Nessus, turn backward to conduct them o'er,
And drive away each troop that makes attack."
Led by the trusty guide, we took our way
That scarlet stream beside; whence rent the shore
Their cries who in the boiling current lay.
Here shades immersed up to the eyebrow stood;
And the great Centaur said: "Tyrants are here,
Who gave themselves to plunder and to blood.
Here they bewail their guilt and cruelty;
Here Alexander,—Dionysius there,
Who years of sorrow wrought for Sicily:

That forehead cover'd with so black a hair
  Is Ezzelino; and that other shade
  Obizzo d'Este, with flaxen locks and fair,
Whom erst on earth his cruel step-son slew."
  Then to the bard I turn'd, and thus he said:
  " Let him go first to guide us—I pursue."
A little way beyond, the Centaur stood,
  Viewing a tribe, who, to the throat immersed,
  Display'd their heads alone above the flood.
He pointed out one solitary shade:
  " 'Twas he in God's own fane, with hand accurst,
  Who pierced the heart o'er Thames revered," he said.
Now saw I others, who above the tide
  Held up their heads, and likewise all the breast;
  And many known to me I here descried.
Then by degrees more shallow was the blood,
  So that it merely reach'd the feet at last;
  And here we went across the gory flood.
" As you may see, on this side of the strand
  The boiling torrent is decreasing still,"
  The Centaur said,—" so may you understand,
That on the other side, yet lower down
  The bottom sinketh by degrees, until
  It reach th' appointed place where tyrants groan.

Justice divine inflicteth there its wrath
On Attila—earth's scourge; on Pyrrhus too;
On Sestus; and for ever draweth forth
The tears, by that hot boiling stream distill'd,
From Rinier Pazzo, and Corneto, who
The public roads with devastation fill'd."
Then back he turn'd, and cross'd the ford anew.

INFERNO.

CANTO XIII.

ARGUMENT.

DANTE enters the second compartment of the seventh circle; which contains those who have done violence to themselves, and their possessions. The first, are changed into rough knotted trees, in which the harpies build their nests; the second are torn by dogs. He converses with Pier della Vigne.

INFERNO.

CANTO XIII.

THE other bank had Nessus scarcely gain'd,
When we betook ourselves into a wood,
Which not a trace of any path contain'd.
No verdant leaves, but of a dusky hue;
No polish'd boughs, but knotted, coarse, and rude;
Nor fruits were there, but thorns with poison too.
Not, by the beasts that spurn the richer ground,
Are stocks so rugged, or such tangled trees
Betwixt Cecina and Corneto found.
There the foul harpies build their nests, by whom
The Trojans were expell'd the Strophades,
With mournful augury of ills to come.

Human their necks and visage, claw'd their feet,
Broad are their wings, and plumed their paunch profound;
Loud wailing, in the gnarled trees they sit.
"Ere thou advance"—my master then began—
"Know, we have enter'd on the second round,
And in it still are destin'd to remain,
Till we arrive within the sandy plain.
Wherefore observe;—for things will meet thine eye,
Whence confirmation will my words obtain."
Now lamentations from each side resounded,
But none who utter'd them could I descry;
Whereat I stay'd my footsteps, all confounded.
These notes perchance he fancied that I thought
Arose from some within the thicket, who
Had haply from our view concealment sought:
For straight he said to me: "If thou shouldst tear
From any of these trees a single bough,
Unfounded will thy present thoughts appear."
A little way I then stretch'd forth my hand,
And pluck'd a twig from off a knotted tree,
Whose trunk exclaim'd: "Why thus my branches rend?"
When the black blood in streams began to roll,
Again it cried: "Why dost thou torture me?
Dwells not a spark of pity in thy soul?

Now turn'd to stocks are we, who once were men:
Thy hand to pity should have more inclined,
E'en had our souls the souls of serpents been."
Like to a sapling, lighted at one end,
Which at the other hisses with the wind,
That finds a vent, and forth deep groans doth send;
So from the broken twig, both words and blood
Flow'd forth;—whereat I dropp'd it on the ground,
And like a man by fear opprest I stood.
" Had he been able to believe before,
O injured soul!" exclaim'd the sage profound,
" What in my verses he hath seen of yore,
He would not thus thy suffering branch have torn;
But so incredible it seem'd, that I
Advised him to the deed which now I mourn.
But tell me who thou art, and what thy name,
That he, returning to the world on high,
As some amends, may renovate thy fame."
Answer'd the trunk: " So sweet thy winning tongue,
I needs must speak;—nor let it anger thee,
If I should haply my discourse prolong.
Know—I am he, who held the double keys
Of Frederick's heart, at pleasure turn'd by me,
Or locking or unlocking with such ease,

That no one else his confidence enjoy'd: 61
With faith so true I fill'd that office high,
E'en sleep was banish'd, life itself destroy'd.
The wicked meretricious dame, who never
From Cæsar's dwelling turn'd her wanton eye,—
That death, that vice, on courts attendant ever,
Fired all against me;—they again the mind 67
Of Cæsar so inflamed, that in short space
My blushing honours were for woes resign'd.
Indignant, and high swelling with disgust,
In death I thought I should escape disgrace;—
Though just to others, to myself unjust.
Now by these fresh and tender roots I swear, 73
I never broke the faith I owed my lord,
Who merited so well the fame he bare.
And if you e'er regain the light of heaven,
Let honour to my memory be restored,
Still suffering from the blow by envy given."
The poet waited till his speech was o'er, 79
And then address'd me: "Let not time be lost,
But speak—and if it please thee, ask him more."
"Do thou," I said, "entreat him to impart
What thou believ'st will satisfy me most;
I cannot speak;—such pity fills my heart."

He then resumed: "E'en to the utmost may
This man fulfil the object of thy prayer,
O injured soul! as thou be pleased to say
How in these knots the spirit is confined;
And whether from such limbs as now ye wear
Doth any one e'er make escape?" A wind
Straight issued bursting from the trunk, and then
To speech resembling this, the breathing changed:
"An answer will I briefly give thee.—When
The furious soul doth from the body bound,
By self-inflicted violence estranged,
Minos adjudges it to this seventh round.
Within the wood it falls, and taketh root
Wherever chance the hapless soul impel;
And there, like to a grain of spelt, doth shoot.
A sapling grown, it mounts a savage plant;
Then, feeding on its leaves, the harpies fell
Give to the anguish that they cause, a vent.
Like others, we shall seek our mortal clay;
But none again their bodies may resume;—
Man merits not the boon he throws away.
Here shall we drag them through this mournful glade,
And they shall be suspended 'mid the gloom,
Each on the thorn of his tormented shade."

Still near the trunk we stood—attention bound,
  Believing it might wish to speak again,
  When we were startled by a sudden sound,—
E'en like to one, who, at his station arm'd,
  When the wild boar and dogs rush on amain,
  Hears the loud crash of boughs, and beasts alarm'd.
Lo! straightway on the left appear'd in view
  Two, torn and naked, who so swiftly fled,
  That all impediments were broken through.
"Now haste thee, haste thee, death!" the foremost cried;
  The other, who was somewhat lagging, said:
  "O Lano, not so hasty was thy stride,
When moved thy limbs from Toppo's bloody field."
  And then, for probably his breath was spent,
  He rush'd into a bush and lay conceal'd.
Behind there was a savage wood, replete
  With black and ravening dogs, on blood intent,
  Like grey-hounds just let loose, so light and fleet.
On him, who crouching in the brushwood lay,
  Fixing their teeth, his flesh they piecemeal rent;
  And then his mangled limbs they bore away.
My faithful escort, seeing me refrain,
  Caught up my hand, and led me to the tree,
  Which through its bloody fissures wept in vain.

"O James St. Andrea!" was its bitter cry,
"Of what avail to make a screen of me?
In thy unhallow'd life what part had I?"
My guide exclaim'd, when nearer him we stood,
"Say who wert thou, who thus through many a pore
Breath'st forth thy mournful speech commix'd with blood?"
"O souls," he said to us, "who are arrived
To view the shameful desolation sore
Which of its leaves my body hath deprived—
Collect them to the foot of yon sad tree.
Mine was that city which exchanged of yore
For John the Baptist her first guardian;—he
Will always use his means to make her sad.
And were it not, in passing Arno o'er,
A partial view of him may still be had,
Those citizens, who built her up again
On ashes left by Attila abhorr'd,
Their mighty labours had bestow'd in vain.—
From mine own roof I swung the fatal cord."

INFERNO.

CANTO XIV.

ARGUMENT.

DANTE enters upon the third division of the seventh circle—a plain of burning sand, in which are punished those who have committed violence against God. Capaneus. An enumeration of the infernal rivers.

INFERNO.

CANTO XIV.

Love for my native country gaining force—
The scatter'd leaves I gather'd up again,
And render'd back to him, who now was hoarse.
Then came we to a boundary, which parts
The third and second circles, where are seen
The racks of justice, and her horrid arts.
These novel things more clearly now to show,
I first must mention that we reach'd a plain,
In whose ungenial bed no plant can grow:
(This plain is compass'd by the mournful wood,
Encircling which is thrown the foss profound:
And here upon the edge of both we stood.)

Before us lay a thick and arid sand,
  Resembling in appearance that parch'd ground
  Trodden by Cato and his martial band.
Vengeance divine! how dreaded shouldst thou be
  By each who reads the horrors I relate,
  And contemplates the torments view'd by me!
Of naked spirits many a flock I saw,
  Who all most wretchedly bewail'd their fate;
  And each seem'd govern'd by a different law.
Some lay supine upon the heated plain;
  And some, their limbs all drawn together, sate;
  While others never ceased to pace amain.
More numerous far were these who paced around;
  And fewer those who lay tormented,—though
  Their lamentations burst with louder sound.
O'er all the sandy desert, falling slow,
  Were shower'd dilated flakes of fire, like snow
  On Alpine summits, when the wind is low.
As Alexander in the glowing lands
  Of Eastern Ind, saw solid flakes of fire
  Descend in showers upon his warrior bands;
And order'd straight, with provident command,
  That each should trample on the vapours dire,
  Lest they unite and spread o'er all the sand;—

Fell thus eternally the fiery rain:
Whence, like to tinder under flint and steel,
The soil ignited to augment their pain.
In ceaseless motion and perpetual play
Their wretched hands on either side they wheel,
The still descending flames to drive away.
Then I: "O master, thou who vanquishest
All who oppose thee, save the fiends who came
Fierce at the gate our entrance to contest—
What mighty one is that—who stern and proud
Appears regardless of the blasting flame,
As by the tempest he were unsubdued?"
Lo, at my words he raised his voice on high,
(For straight perceived he that of him I spoke,)
"Such as I was in life, in death am I.
Though angry Jove his hardy workmen tire,
From whom the pointed thunderbolt he took,
The day I fell beneath the blasting fire;
Or though the rest he at the forge upbraid
In Mongibello, wearied all in turn,—
Exclaiming: 'Haste thee;—aid! good Vulcan, aid!'
As once he cried in the Phlegræan fight—
And though his fiercest shafts my bosom burn,
From sweet revenge he ne'er shall reap delight."

Then spake my guide with greater vehemence
Than hitherto had e'er been heard by me:
"O Capaneus, in that thou dost not quench
Thy impious pride, more pangs doth Heaven assign;
For, save thy rage, no punishment could be
Fit retribution for a wrath like thine."
Turning to me, a milder look he gave;—
"Lo one," he cried, "of those seven kings, who erst
Beleaguer'd Thebes; and had, and seems to have,
Little regard or reverence for his God:
But, as I told him—his own rage accurst
Is to his bosom a deserved reward.
Now come behind me, and beware," he said,
"Thy feet thou set not on the burning sand,
But close along the forest ever tread."
Silent we came to where a little rill,
Gushing from out the wood, runs through the land,
So red—its waters make me shudder still:
E'en as the rivulet from Bulicame,
Shared by the sinners, doth its course pursue,—
So through the arid sand flow'd down this stream.
Its bed and sloping sides along the way
Were petrified, and both the margins too,
Whereon I straight perceived our passage lay.

"'Mid all the wonders I to thee have shown,
Since at that gate we first an entrance made,
Whose gloomy threshold is denied to none—
Nothing within these regions hast thou found
So worth thy notice, as this river dread,
Whose vapours quench the flames that fall around."
These words concluded—I besought my guide
That as he had awaked an appetite,
My hunger might with food be satisfied.
"An isle there is encircled by the sea—
Ruin'd and waste," he said; "its name is Crete,
Under whose king once flourish'd chastity:
A mountain rises in that ancient land,
Named Ida, joyful erst with woods and streams;—
Deserted now—like some forbidden strand.
This for the secret cradle of her son
Chose Rhea, who, to drown the infant's screams,
Fill'd all the air with clamours of her own.
A huge old man stands in the mount upright;
To Damietta turn his shoulders vast,
Rome, as a mirror is before his sight.
His head is wrought of finely-temper'd gold;
Of purest silver are the arms and breast;
Down to the hips, of brass is form'd the mould:

Thence to the feet of polish'd steel 'tis made,
  Save the right foot, on which his weight he bears;
  And that alone of clay is fashioned.
All parts except the gold are sorely rent,
  While from the fissure gush forth copious tears,
  Which in the cave collected, find a vent.
These flowing hither, broken rocks among,
  Form Acheron, and Styx, and Flegethon;
  Whence in this straight canal they pass along,
Till, at the bottom of the infernal pit,
  They form Cocytus' lake: but that anon
  Thou shalt behold;—I need not speak of it."

Then I to him: "The present stream accurst—
  If from our world above it floweth, say
  Why at this nether ridge appears it first."
He answer'd me: "Thou know'st the place is round,
  And though full long hath hither been thy way,
  (Still on the left descending the profound)—
Not yet throughout the circle hast thou gone:
  If aught of novelty thou witness then,
  No need that wonder on thy looks be shown."

"O master, tell me where," again I said,
  "Are Flegethon and Lethe;—this, of rain
  Composed,—and that, of which no mention thou hast made?"

He answer'd me: "Thy questions please me well;
But as to one—the red and boiling wave
Might surely of itself thy doubts dispel:
Lethe thou shalt behold, far distant hence,
There, where the shades resort, their forms to lave,
When crime hath been removed by penitence.
Now is it fitting time to leave the wood:
In the same path with me direct thy feet.
The margins unconsumed afford a road,
For over them no flame retains its heat."

INFERNO.

CANTO XV.

ARGUMENT.

DANTE meets a troop of spirits who have been guilty of crimes against nature. He recognizes his former preceptor Brunetto Latini, to whom he expresses his gratitude. Brunetto characterizes the Florentines, and intimates to Dante the evils he may expect.

INFERNO.

CANTO XV.

On one of those firm margins lay our road;
And o'er the water rose thick clouds of mist,
Sheltering the stream, and piers on which we trod.
E'en such embankments as the Flemings rear,
The flood's impetuous progress to resist,
'Twixt Ghent and Bruges, where its rage they fear;
And such as, to protect from Brenta's might
Their villas, Padua's citizens devise,
Ere melts the snow on Chiarentana's height;—
Embankments like to these were here display'd;
But not so lofty, or so vast in size,
Whoe'er their builder was, these piers were made.

So far behind us had we left the wood,
That, had I turn'd me round, in vain had been
The endeavour to behold it whence we stood,—
When on the margin by the river's side
A band of souls we met, whose prying eyen
Scann'd us, as men are wont at eventide
'Neath the young moon to scan each passer by;
And straight tow'rds us their brows they sharpen'd up,
Like an old tailor at his needle's eye.
My features, thus so stedfastly survey'd,
Were recognized by one of this strange troop,
Who seiz'd my skirt, and, "Oh! how wondrous!" said.
When forth he stretch'd his arm, my looks were bent
So earnestly upon his scorched brow,
That e'en his shrivell'd face could not prevent
My recollection of him full and clear:
Then downward to his face my own I bow,
Exclaiming: "Ser Brunetto, art thou here?"
"May it displease thee not," he said, "my son,
"If for some little distance back with thee
Brunetto turn, while this our band moves on."
"Turn, I implore,—and with thee," I replied;
"I'll sit me down, if so thy wish it be,
And it offendeth not my faithful guide."

" He of this flock who but one moment rests,
Lies here a hundred years, my son," said he,—
" No fan to cool him when the fire molests.
Wherefore proceed—I at thy skirt will go,
And afterwards my wretched troop rejoin,
Who journeying on bewail their endless woe."
I dared not venture down, that I might tread
Level with him; but bending low incline,
Like one who reverently bows his head.
" What fortune, or what destiny," he cried,
" Hath brought thee here before the final day?
And who is he that deigns thy path to guide?"
Then I: " In that fair world which lies above
Bewilder'd in a vale I went astray,
Ere riper years my steps could disapprove;
Nor left till yestermorn that vale of gloom;
But thither was returning, when he came
Who by this pathway reconducts me home."
" A glorious port, if thou pursue thy star,
Thou canst not fail to reach," did he exclaim,
" If true my judgment in life's season fair.
And had not death full early closed mine eyes,
Seeing that heaven was so benign to thee,
I would have aided thy sublime emprize.

But that ungrateful and malignant race,
Who erst came down from lofty Fiesole,
And of their mountain flint still bear the trace,—
Thy goodness to requite, will surely bring
Evil on thee; and it is meet they should;
For not with crabs the pleasant fig should spring.
In olden time they were reported blind;
A people greedy, envious, and proud:
From their depravity cleanse thou thy mind.
Such fame thy fortune hath in store;—for thee
Shall either side with craving hunger pant;
But from the goat far let the sweet herb be.
Then let them tread each other under foot—
The beasts of Fiesole:—be spared the plant,
If any 'mid their filth still chance to shoot,
Whence may the hallow'd seed of Rome revive—
That seed in Florence left, when she was made
A nest for such malignity to thrive."
I answer'd him: "Had all my prayers been heard,
Not yet the debt of nature had you paid,
Nor been from human intercourse debarr'd:
For still, deep fix'd within my memory,
Lives your paternal image, good and dear,
As when from day to day you counsell'd me

How man may best immortalize his name:
  My gratitude, while yet I breathe the air,
  'Tis meet I show, and with my voice proclaim.
What you have told me of my days to come
  I treasure up, to be explain'd by her,
  If e'er I reach her, who will know my doom.
But upon these my words of truth rely;—
  If in my breast no secret stings I feel,
  Let Fortune do her worst—prepared am I:
Not new to me this prophesy I trow:
  Then, as she lists, let Fortune turn her wheel;
  And let the peasant turn his custom'd hoe."
Now to the right my master bent with speed,
  And on mine ear his warning accents fell:
  "He listens to good purpose who takes heed."
Not that I ceased discoursing as I went
  With Ser Brunetto, asking him to tell
  Who of his comrades were most eminent.
"The histories of some I may relate;
  Others," he said, "'twere better not to name;
  Time would be wanting for a theme so great.
Know briefly—all were priests and learned men,
  Great Literati, and well known to fame,
  On earth polluted with the selfsame stain.

Priscian proceeds with that accursed crew,
  Accorso too :—him mayst thou see besides,
  (If anxious such impurity to view,)
Who by the servant's servant was dismiss'd
  From Arno to where Bacchiglione glides ;
  There ceased his lustful body to exist.
More would I say, but here must end our speech ;
  And now we two must part, for I perceive
  Fresh dust arising from the sandy beach :
Spirits approach with whom I may not be ;
  My Treasure recommend, in which I live,—
  No other favour do I ask of thee."
Then back he turn'd, and one of those he seem'd,
  Who at Verona in the race essay
  To gain the mantle green ; and might be deem'd
Not he who loses, but who wins the day.

INFERNO.

CANTO XVI.

ARGUMENT.

DANTE converses with several distinguished Florentines—Guidoguerra—Tegghiaio Aldobrandi—Jacopo Rusticucci. They inquire after the state of Florence. He takes off his girdle, and gives it to Virgil, who throws it down into the abyss of the eighth circle. A horrible monster presently appears.

INFERNO.

CANTO XVI.

THE murmur of the waters now I heard,
As downward to the neighbouring round they pour,
And like the hum of bees the noise appear'd;
When from a band of spirits, that pass'd by
Beneath the pelting of the fiery shower,
Three issued forth with great celerity:
Tow'rds us they came, and all at once cried: "Stand—
Thou, whom I judge to be, from thine attire,
A native of our own degraded land."
Ah me! what wounds upon their limbs I view'd,
Recent, and old, and cauterised by fire!
My grief is at the very thought renew'd.

Hearing their cry, the teacher turn'd to me,
Exclaiming: "Let thy foot awhile be stay'd,
For to these souls is due some courtesy;
And did the nature of the place permit,
Which hurls such fiery darts,—I should have said
That haste would rather thee than them befit."
As we drew up, they all their ancient plaint
Commenced again; and when to us they came,
All three a circle form'd, and round they went.
As champions stript, anointed for the fight,
Their hold and vantage scan with careful aim,
Ere they with blows together try their might;
Thus wheeling round, did each to me his look
Direct, so that the neck and foot the while
A contrary direction ever took.
"And if," said one, "this wretched place forlorn,
And our scorch'd faces, sorrowful and vile,
Bring on ourselves and on our prayers thy scorn,—
Still let our fame incline thy soul to tell
Who thou mayst be, that thus, with living feet,
Securely glidest o'er the paths of hell.
He in whose track I tread, though now he be
All naked and deprived of skin, had yet
Far higher rank than would be deem'd by thee.

The grandson was he of Gualdrada good—
Brave Guidoguerra, of distinguish'd fame;
Great deeds he wrought by skill and hardihood.
The other near to me, that beats the sand,
Is Tegghiaio Aldobrand, whose honour'd name
Should in the world above some praise command.
And I, who with them am in torment placed,
Was Rusticucci; and in truth my woe
May to my haughty wife be chiefly traced."
Could I have been protected from the fire,
I should have thrown myself 'midst them below,
Nor would my guide have thwarted my desire;
But since I dared not tempt the blasting flame,
My wishes to embrace them were repress'd,
And fear my friendly eagerness o'ercame.
I then began: " 'Tis not disdain, but grief
For your sad fate, which penetrates my breast;
And from the moment of my first belief
That persons like to you were on their way,
(Such import did my master's words imply,)
I felt a pang, that time can scarce allay.
Your country gave me birth—your names renown'd
Are ever living in my memory;
And still I love to hear your deeds resound.

I leave the gall,—of that sweet fruit in quest
Which hath been promised by my faithful guide,
But to the centre must I journey first."
" So may thy spirit animate thy frame
Through many a year to come," he then replied,
" And after death shine forth thy glorious name,
As thou inform me whether to this day
Valour and courtesy our city grace,
As they were wont;—or are they cast away?
For Borsieri, whom thou viewest there,
Condemn'd but lately to this dismal place,
Gives us much pain by what he doth declare."
" Thee, Florence, have an upstart race and new,
And sudden gains, so fill'd with waste and pride,
That thine excess thou dost already rue!"
Thus cried I--looking up; and they forsooth,
Who took this sentence for an answer, eyed
Each other, like to men who hear the truth.
" If at all times an answer to bestow,
With no more cost," they said, " to thee is given,
O happy thou from whom such accents flow!
Wherefore if thou escape these realms of night,
And e'er return to see the stars of heaven,—
Then, when to say—' I was'—shall give delight,

Forget not to make mention of us there."
This said—they broke the circle; and again
Their feet appear'd like wings to cut the air:
So quick they vanish'd, that with greater speed
None could have even utter'd an Amen:
The master then thought fitting to proceed:—
I follow'd him, and short was our career,
Before the sound of water so increased,
That one could scarcely make the other hear.
E'en as that river, which derives its source
From Veso,—then pursuing to the east,
On Appenines' left side, its separate course—
Call'd Acquacheta higher up, before
Its waves adown the humble valley flow,
(At Forli bearing the same name no more,)
Re-bellows o'er St. Benedict on high,
As from the Alps it headlong falls below;
Whence thousands might derive a full supply;
Thus from the summit of a broken rock
Rush'd the dark stream with such tremendous din,
Our ears had soon been deafen'd by the shock.
Around my waist I had a girdle tied,
With which indeed I once had thought to win
The nimble Panther of the spotted hide:

Forth from my loins this girdle I unbind,
Obedient to my courteous guide's command,
And gave it to him in a knot entwined.
Then to the right he turn'd himself around,
And cast it over from the lofty strand
E'en to the bottom of the gulf profound.
I said within me: At this signal new,
Which thus my master watches with his eye,
Some novelty most surely will ensue.
Alas, how cautious mortals ought to be
Tow'rds those, who not the deed alone espy,
But by their skill the inmost thoughts can see!
" Full soon, what I am waiting for," he said,
" Shall upwards come; and that on which now dwell
Thy dreaming thoughts, ere long shall be display'd."
That truth which bears the semblance of a lie
Should never pass the lips if possible:—
Though crime be absent—still disgrace is nigh.
But here I needs must speak; and by the rhymes,
Reader, I swear, of this my Comedy,
(So may they live with fame to future times,)
That through the gross and murky air I saw
A monstrous figure swimming up to me,
Such as would fill the stoutest heart with awe—

Like unto one returning, that hath been
To loose an anchor, which fast grappling clings
To rocks, or aught beneath the waves unseen,
Who gathers in his feet, and upwards springs.

INFERNO.

CANTO XVII.

ARGUMENT.

THE monster Geryon, representing Fraud, is described. While Virgil is speaking to him, Dante proceeds to examine the fraudulent sinners and usurers in this third compartment. On his return they both descend into the eighth circle on the back of Geryon.

INFERNO.

CANTO XVII.

" Behold the beast with sharpen'd tail acute,
  Who pierces mountain, wall, and armed host;
  Behold the beast who doth the world pollute:"
Me in these words my faithful guide bespake;
  Then beckon'd him to land upon the coast,
  And where the causeway ends, his station take.
Nor did Fraud's base and filthy image fail
  To raise upon the bank his head and breast,
  But on the shore he drew not forth his tail.
The features of an honest man he wore,
  So outwardly benignant:--all the rest
  The semblance of a wily serpent bore:

Two branching arms he had all rough with hair;
And either flank, his back and ample chest,
Emboss'd with knots and traced with circles were.
Not richer hues, embroider'd or inlaid
By Turks or Tartars, e'er adorn'd a vest;
Nor such the gorgeous web Arachne made.
As oft light vessels stand upon the shore—
Part in the water, part upon the land;—
And as, where dwells the greedy German boor,
The beaver sits, intent to watch his prey;—
So on the edge of stone that fenced the sand,
Crouching—this beast most execrable lay:
High o'er the void his tail through every joint
He vibrated; quick writhing to and fro
The scorpion fork which arm'd th' envenom'd point.
Exclaim'd my sage conductor: "Now 'tis meet
To turn awhile, and on the margin go,
Until we reach that monster of deceit."
We then descended, bearing to the right,
And walk'd ten paces onward o'er the strand,
To shun the flames and burning marle in sight.
Arriving near the beast—not far beyond
I view a party seated on the sand,
Near to the margin of the gulf profound.

Then Virgil: "That experience thou may'st learn,
And of this round the horrors comprehend,
Go—and thyself their sad estate discern;
But have a care lest thou thy speech prolong;—
I will entreat the beast his aid to lend,
And bear us down upon his shoulders strong."
Alone I thus proceeded to the place,
Still coasting the seventh circle's boundary,
Where seated I beheld this woeful race.
Grief gushing through their eyes a passage found;
And each applied his hands alternately
Against the vapour and the torrid ground,—
Like dogs—who basking in the summer's heat,
When gadflies fierce and busy gnats torment,
Now frequent ply the mouth, and now the feet.
I gazed on many of these spirits grieved,
O'er whom falls down the fiery element,
But none of them I knew,—yet I perceived
That from the neck of each a purse was swung,
With certain sign and certain colour deck'd;
On this, it seem'd, their sight with fondness hung.
And when I came among them—looking round,
I saw a lion's semblance and aspect,
Painted in azure on a yellow ground.

Extending then mine eyes amid the herd,
Another purse I saw as red as blood,
On which was wrought a goose more white than curd.
And one, upon whose purse of argent hue
A lusty swine in azure colours stood,
Exclaim'd: "In this abyss what doest thou?"
Begone—and since of life thou art not reft,
Know—Vitaliano, my rich neighbour there,
Shall take his seat with me upon my left.
A Paduan I, 'mid Florentines am here,
And oftentimes they thunder in my ear:
'Let him arrive—the mighty cavalier—
Who with three beaks a satchel shall disclose.'"
Thereat he writh'd his mouth, and show'd his tongue,
E'en like unto an ox that licks his nose.
I, who now fear'd that my protracted stay
Might anger him who bade me not be long,
Back from the weary spirits took my way.
On the fierce monster's haunches I behold,
Already seated high, my faithful guide,
Who thus enjoin'd me: "Now be firm and bold:
Such are the stairs by which we must descend;
Climb thou in front, and I behind will ride,
Lest any mischief from the tail impend."

As he who 's threaten'd with an ague fit,
His nails already blue—all shivering cold
Looks on the shade—unable to retreat;
Such I became;—but by his threats restored,
I felt that shame which makes the servant bold,
When in the presence of a gracious lord.
High on his shoulders wide I took my seat,
And would have said: "Beware and hold me fast;"
But words came not, my wishes to complete.
Then he, who oft before had lent me aid
In arduous enterprize, flung round my waist
His friendly arms—upholding me; and said:
"Now, Geryon, may you take your downward way;
Large be your circles—slow be your descent;—
Think what unusual burden you convey."
Then, as a little vessel out of port
Backs by degrees—e'en so the monster went;
And when he was at liberty to sport,
His tail he turn'd to where his breast had been,
Moving it, thus extended, like an eel,
While with his arms the air he gather'd in.
Nor erst, I ween, existed greater fears
When Phaeton from his chariot headlong fell,
Whereby the heavens took fire, as still appears:

Nor when the wretched Icarus in dismay
Felt the wax melting and the feathers fall,
His father crying, " Dangerous is thy way"—
Than I experienced, high upborne in air—
Air all around:—how did the void appall!—
For nought except the dreaded beast was there.
Onward by slow degrees he swam; and slow—
Wheeling—descended; unperceived by me,
Save that a vapour fann'd me from below.
Now on the right I heard the vortex dread
Roaring beneath, whereat full eagerly
I downward cast mine eye with bending head.
Still more was I dismay'd to view it near;
For flames were seen, and lamentations heard,
Wherefore I gather'd up my limbs for fear.
And by the woes which burst upon my sight
From every side, now plainly first appear'd
The circling motion, and our downward flight.
E'en as a falcon, which, upborne in air
Longtime, without descrying lure or bird
(Making the falconer utter in despair,
" Alas, thou stoop'st!") fatigued descends from high;
Then whirling swiftly round in many a ring,
Far from his master sits—disdainfully;

Thus lighting, Geryon placed us on our feet
Beneath the rock, and then again took wing,
Soon as he felt disburden'd of our weight,
Like to an arrow starting from the string.

INFERNO.

CANTO XVIII.

ARGUMENT.

DESCRIPTION of the eighth circle, divided into ten gulfs. This canto treats only of the two first, in which are punished those who have been guilty of seduction and flattery. The first are scourged by demons; the second immersed in filth.

INFERNO.

CANTO XVIII.

THERE is in hell a place, stone-built throughout,
  Call'd Malebolge—of an iron hue,
  Like to the wall that circles it about.
Full in the middle of this baleful land
  Yawns the deep gulf, of ample size to view,
  Whose form in proper place shall be explain'd.
The circling boundary that remains beside,
  'Twixt the rock's basis and the gulf profound,
  Ten bastions to its lowest depth divide.
As is the form presented to the eye
  By fortresses, whose massive walls around
  Run numerous trenches for security;

Such was the semblance which these dikes display'd:
And from the threshold of such castles strong,
As bridges to the outer bank are laid;
So from the basis of the rock extend
Bridges, across the moles and vallies flung,
Far as the ample gulf in which they end.
Here was it, that, released from Geryon's back,
We found ourselves; and then the poet drew
On tow'rds the left, and I pursued his track.
Upon the right new tortures I beheld,
New pains, and ministers of vengeance new,
With which the first recess throughout was fill'd.
Down in the gulf were naked souls descried;
Some from the middle were advancing—some
Were journeying with us, but with greater stride.
So o'er the bridge, the concourse to convey,
Which flocks, the year of Jubilee, to Rome,
Means are devised to form a double way,—
That on the one side, all preserve in front
The castle, to St. Peter's as they throng,—
All on the other, journey to the Mount.
Now here, now there, upon the ramparts high
Horn'd fiends with rods enormous ran along,
Smiting the sinners' backs most cruelly.

Alas! how from the lash, excoriate
  At the first stripe, with swiftest heels they fled;
  A second or a third none dare await!
As we proceeded, one I chanced to see,
  Whose face beholding, instantly I said:
  " Surely his features are not new to me."
Wherefore I paused, to call him to my mind;
  His footsteps too my gracious guide withheld,
  Giving me leave awhile to turn behind.
The suffering wretch, who thought his face to hide,
  Bent down his head; but little it avail'd:
  " Thou—who art looking on the ground," I cried,
" Unless thy features do thy name belie,
  Caccianimico must thou be: but tell,
  What to such pungent torture makes thee hie?"
" Reluctantly," he said, " shalt thou be told
  What thy clear speech compels me to reveal,
  Recalling to my mind the days of old.
Know I am he, who urged fair Ghisola
  To yield obedience to the Marquis' will;
  This is the truth—whatever fame may say.
We Bolognese so greatly here abound,
  That not 'twixt Reno and Savena's rill
  So many tongues, I deem, could now be found,

Who utter Sipa in their country's phrase.
If proof of my assertion thou wouldst have,
Recall to mind our avaricious ways."
Him as he spake, a demon in his ire
Smote with his lash, and said: "Begone, vile slave,
Here are no women to be let for hire."
I hasten'd to rejoin my faithful guide:
Then shortly came we, where appear'd in sight
A bridge, projecting from the rocky side:
O'er this full easily our steps we drew,
And, mounting its high ridges on the right,
To those eternal barriers bade adieu.
Arriving where the opening arch supplies
A passage to the tortured souls, my guide
Exclaim'd: "Now pause awhile, and fix thine eyes
Upon the rest of this ill-fated race;
For as they've journied hither by our side,
Thou can'st not hitherto have seen their face."
From the old bridge we then survey'd the band,
That tow'rds us from the other coast drew near,
Driven onward in like manner by the brand.
To me unask'd my gracious master said:
"Behold that mighty one approaching here,
Who in his sorrow deigns no tear to shed.

How well he yet retains the royal port!
Jason is this, whose skill and hardihood
The golden fleece from ancient Colchis brought:
Through Lemnos' isle he pass'd upon his way,
What time th' inexorable females rude
Consign'd their males to cruel death a prey.
There, with smooth words and winning flattery,
Beguiled he her who first had practised guile
On her companions— young Hypsipyle.
He left the damsel pregnant and forlorn,
And here is punish'd for his treachery vile.
Here too Medea's wrongs he's doom'd to mourn:
Deceivers like to him these sufferings share.
This much let it suffice thee to have heard
Of the first round, and those in penance there."
Now came we where the narrow causeway pass'd
E'en from the second mole unto the third;
Its arms from one unto the other cast.
Thence in th' ensuing vault a tribe were seen,
Snorting, and muttering, with the filth opprest,
Who smote themselves the while with hands unclean.
The banks were crusted o'er with scum, that rose
In steam from the abyss, and form'd a paste,
Much to the annoyance of the eyes and nose.

So deep the bottom, that to gain a sight
'Twas needful up the bridge to clamber first,
And take a survey from its utmost height.
Here we arrived; and, in the trench below,
Spirits I saw in ordure foul immersed,
Which, as it seem'd, to man its source did owe.
And while I gazed beneath with zeal increased,
One I beheld with so bedaub'd a head,
I could not tell the layman from the priest.
"Wherefore art thou so greedily inclined
To look on me above the rest?" he said:
"Because," I cried, "if well I call to mind,
Thee have I seen, when erst thy hair was dry,
In Lucca bred, Interminei thy name;
Wherefore I scan thee with more curious eye."
Striking his head, to me he then replied:
"'Twas flattery plunged me in this place of shame,
With which my tongue was never satisfied."
Forthwith the master said: "Now prithee stretch
A little further in advance thy brow;
So that thine eyesight may distinctly reach
The head of that vile courtesan unclean,
Who tears herself with filthy nails; and now
Appears recumbent—upright now is seen—

Thais, the harlot,—who, when Thraso cried, 133
'Say will the thanks I shall receive from thee
Be many?' 'Oh! a mighty load!' replied:
This having view'd, our eyes may sated be."

INFERNO.

CANTO XIX.

ARGUMENT.

THIRD division of the eighth circle. The Popes, who have been guilty of simony, are fixed in circular holes, with their heads down; — their legs only appearing:—the soles of their feet burnt with flames. Pope Nicholas the Third; Boniface the Eighth; and Clement the Fifth.

INFERNO.

CANTO XIX.

O Simon Magus, O ye wretched train!
  Rapacious—who the hallow'd things of God
  Do prostitute to gold and sordid gain,—
Those things which should to goodness wedded be;
  For you 'tis meet the trumpet sound aloud,—
  Assign'd to this third gulf of misery!
Now to the vault adjoining had we come,
  And on the summit of the bridge we stood,
  Where midway hangs its arch athwart the tomb.
Wisdom supreme! how great thy skill, declare
  The Heavens—the Earth—and Hell's profound abode!
  How just to each thy dispensations are!

The sides and bottom of the livid ground
  Were full of holes, where'er mine eyes I moved;
  Of like circumference,—and all were round.
Not greater or less ample seem'd their size
  Than—in St. John's fair fane, by me beloved—
  Those basins form'd for water, to baptize;
(One of the same I broke some years ago,
  To save a drowning child: be this my word
  A seal, the motive of the deed to show.)
Without each aperture, to sight reveal'd,
  A sinner's feet and both his legs appear'd,
  Far as the calves;—the rest remain'd conceal'd.
The soles of every one in flames were wrapt,
  Which made the joints so forcibly to play,
  That every kind of cord they would have snapt.
E'en as a flame with rapid course doth steal
  O'er the smooth surface of its oily prey,—
  So glided here the fire from toe to heel.
Then I: "O master! say what is his name
  Whose quivering legs bespeak intenser pangs,
  And seem the victims of a fiercer flame?"
"Wilt thou," he answer'd, "that I bear thee down
  Along the bank which there more sloping hangs,
  And he himself his evil deeds shall own?"

"That pleaseth me, which pleaseth thee the best;
Thou art my lord," I said—"thy will is mine;
To thee are known the secrets of my breast."
O'er the fourth pier we then pursued our way,
And to the left descending still incline,
Where full of holes the narrow bottom lay.
Nor did my master set me down again,
Till we had reach'd that most afflicted shade,
Whose quivering ancles so betray'd his pain.
"O thou whose upper parts are thrust below,—
Fixt like a stake, most wretched soul," I said,
"Oh! if thou canst, a word on me bestow!"
Like to a friar I stood, that doth confess
A murderer, who, to gain a moment's space,
Calls back the priest in his extreme distress.
"What! art thou come—and upright too?" he cried,
"Art thou arrived—and upright, Boniface?
A longer life the prophecy implied.
Art thou so soon with thy possessions sated,
For which with treachery the Lady fair
Was carried off by thee, and then ill treated?"
Like those who stand in wonder and dismay,
Not comprehending a reply they hear,
Duped as they think—not knowing what to say;

So lost was I:—anon the poet cried: 61
" Inform him thou art not the man he named:"—
I, as directed, instantly replied.
Whereat the spirit writhed with both his feet;
Then sighing with a mournful voice, exclaim'd:
" What is it thou demandest, I entreat?
But if, to learn what name on earth I had, 67
Thou took'st the pains to scramble down the steep,
Know—with the mighty mantle was I clad;
And truly was descended from a bear:
T'enrich my whelps I laid my schemes so deep,
My wealth I've stow'd above—my person here.
Hid 'neath my head, in durance vile, are now 73
Those who before me practised simony,
Within the stony fissure dragg'd below.
And in my turn I downward shall descend
When he arrives, whom I took thee to be,
What time I made so sudden a demand.
But my scorch'd feet have longer suffer'd pain, 79
And longer has my head been thus depress'd,
Than he in like endurance shall remain;
For after him—more impious and unjust—
Shall come a lawless shepherd from the west,
By whom still deeper shall we both be thrust:

He (like another Jason, who we read
In Maccabees, the royal favour won)
Shall France induce his wishes to concede."
Presumption, it might haply be, inspired
The answer which I made him in this tone:
" Say if our blessed Saviour aught required
Of money from St. Peter's hand, when he
The keys entrusted to him?—surely not.
He ask'd no more than—simply—' Follow me.'
Nor gold nor silver the Disciples took,
When on Matthias fell the destined lot
To fill the place which Judas base forsook:
Wherefore remain, for justly doom'd thou art;
And treasure up the ill-earn'd wealth accurst
Which against Charles so fiercely fired thy heart.
And were it not, that I am still restrain'd
By reverence for those mighty keys, which erst
In life's sweet season dignified thy hand,
Words more severe than these should I bestow:
Trampling the good, and raising up the bad—
Your avarice o'erwhelms the world in woe.
To you St. John referr'd, O shepherds vile,
When She, who sits on many waters, had
Been seen with kings her person to defile;

(The same, who with seven heads arose on earth,
And bore ten horns, to prove that power was hers
Long as her husband had delight in worth.)
Your God ye make of silver and of gold;
And wherein differ from Idolaters,
Save that their God is one, but your's a hundred fold?
Ah Constantine! what evils caused to flow—
Not thy conversion, but those fair domains
Thou on the first rich Father didst bestow!"
While I upbraided thus in strain severe,
And rage, or conscience added to his pains,
His either feet were quivering in the air.
My guide was pleased, I do believe, forsooth,
So satisfied a smile his lips express'd,
As he stood listening to my words of truth.
Wherefore around me, both his arms he cast;
And when he had upraised me to his breast,
The way he came he speedily retraced.
Without fatigue he seem'd the weight to bear,
Till on the bridge's top he took his stand,
Which passes from the fourth to the fifth pier.
Here laid he gently down his cherish'd load
Upon the surface of the rocky strand,
Which e'en to goats would seem a rugged road:
Another valley then appear'd at hand.

INFERNO.

CANTO XX.

ARGUMENT.

In the fourth division are punished those, who, while living, pretended to foretell future events. Their faces are twisted behind, so that they are constrained to walk backwards. Amphiaraus. Tiresias. Aruns. Manto. Michael Scot. &c.

INFERNO.

CANTO XX.

NEW sufferings must my verse proceed to tell,
Forming the twentieth canto of this book,
Which treats of those who are immersed in hell.
Now all intent mine eyes were cast below,
As of the yawning gulf a view I took,
O'erflow'd with sorrows of severest woe.
Shades I beheld approach with tearful eyes,
Silent, and sad, throughout the circle dread;
Their step—like theirs who chaunt the litanies;
When nearer I survey'd these souls accurst,
From underneath the chin appear'd the head
Of each, in manner wonderful reversed.

So that the face was twisted to the back;
And want of faculty to see before
Compell'd them blindly to pursue their track.
Paralysis perhaps may much distort,
And dislocate the human body sore,
But change like this I deem was never wrought.
Think, reader—if God bids thy heart relent,
And reap instruction from this tale of woe—
How I the tear of pity could prevent,
When near to me the human form I view'd
So turn'd and twisted, that the drops which flow
Down from the eyes, the hinder parts bedew'd.
I wept indeed, as I reclining prest
A fragment of the rock, until my guide
Exclaim'd: "What, art thou foolish like the rest?
Here pity lives when dead;—and what can be
More wicked, or a sign of greater pride,
Than pitying those condemn'd by heaven's decree?
Look up, look up,—see him before thee now,
For whom the land of Thebes was seen to gape,
When all exclaim'd: 'O whither rushest thou?
Why, Amphiaraus, quittest thou the fight?'
But he abstain'd not from the desperate leap,
And headlong plunged to realms of endless night.

Behold a breast where once his shoulders lay:
Since to foreknowledge erst he laid a claim,
Now looks he back, and backwards makes his way.
Behold Tiresias, alter'd in his mien,
When from a male a female he became,
Changing his manly limbs to feminine,—
And with his rod the twisted serpents twain,
Compell'd to punish with a second blow,
Ere he could take his former plumes again.
Arons is this, to like reverse consign'd,
Who in the hills of Luni (where below,
Deep in the valley, delves Carrara's hind)
Had for his dwelling place a marble cave,
Whence to his sight a prospect was reveal'd
Of heaven's bright stars, and ocean's azure wave.
And she, who with her long dishevell'd hair
Covers her bosom, from our view conceal'd,
(For all her locks fall down in ringlets there)
Was Manto, who through many a country stray'd,
And settled afterwards where I was born:
Now let attention to my words be paid.
After her father left his mortal clay,
And Thebes was doom'd in slavish bonds to mourn,
Long time o'er earth she sped her weary way.

In beauteous Italy a lake there lies,
  Its name Benacus, over the Tyrol,—
  Above it, high the lofty Alps arise;—
More than a thousand gushing springs, I ween,
  Which 'twixt Camonica and Garda roll,
  This lake receives within its bosom sheen.
Here is a spot where Brescia's Bishop might
  Meet with Verona's, and with Trento's too,
  And give their blessings in each other's sight.
Where slopes the bank with easier descent,
  Against the Bergamese and Brescian foe
  A warlike front Peschiera doth present.
There fall the waters with their swelling tide,
  That from Benacus' bosom running o'er,
  In limpid streams through verdant meadows glide.
When from the lake it first begins to flow,
  'Tis Mincio call'd—Benacus now no more—
  E'en to Governo, where it joins the Po.
Nor wandereth far, before it finds a plain,
  O'er which its waves in stagnant pools are spread;
  Where, in the summer, noxious vapours reign.
Passing this way, the virgin rude saw land,
  Full in the middle of the marshy bed,
  Without inhabitants—a barren strand.

Here, to avoid all converse with mankind,
She with her followers resolved to dwell;
Here lived, and here her body left behind.
To this lone isle from all the country round
Did men collect, as to a citadel;
So strong it was—enclosed by marshy ground.
On her dead bones a famous city rose,
And Mantua was the name that it received,
From her whose judgment first the station chose.
More numerous were its citizens of old,
Ere Casalodi foolishly believed
The artful tale that Pinamont had told.
And now I warn thee—if thou ever hear
My country's source to other causes traced,
Allow not falsehood to abuse thine ear."
"Master, thy speech convinceth me,"—I said;
"So firmly on thy words my faith is placed,
All else would seem to me as embers dead.
But those who walk before,—I pray thee tell,
If any thou deem worthy of remark,
For upon them my thoughts entirely dwell."
My master then: "He with so long a beard
Which from his cheek spreads o'er his shoulders dark—
When Greece was of her males so nearly clear'd,

That few were left the cradles to supply—
For augury was famed;—in Aulis he
With Calchas sage uprear'd the signal high:
Eurypilus his name, as is rehearsed
In part of my exalted tragedy;
Thou know'st it well, who in the whole art versed.
The other, round his loins so thin and slight,
Was Michael Scot, renown'd for magic art,
And deem'd in ancient times a wondrous wight.
Lo Guido,—and Asdente, who laments
That e'er he was prevail'd upon to part
With thread and leather; but too late repents.
See those who erst the loom and spindle left
To practise witchcraft—a vile female race,
In use of herbs and incantations deft
But let us on—for either hemisphere
Cain and the thorns with paly light embrace,
And dip beneath fair Seville's waters clear.
Last night the moon her fullest orb display'd:
And, wandering in that darksome valley rude,
Well may'st thou call to mind her timely aid."
He spake: and we our onward road pursued.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXI.

ARGUMENT.

In the fifth partition are punished barterers and public peculators. They are plunged in a lake of boiling pitch, and guarded by Demons, who thrust them back whenever they appear above. These Demons prepare to attack Virgil, who calms them by his undaunted manner. They are ordered by their leader to conduct the poets forward.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXI.

Advancing thus from bridge to bridge we went,
  Speaking of things I care not now to tell
  In this my Comedy: the steep ascent
We reach'd, and paused to view the next profound
  In Malebolge:—here vain cries prevail;
  And marvellous the darkness spread around.
As in the arsenal of Venice boils
  Th' adhesive pitch in winter, to repair
  The bark disabled by long watery toils;
For since they cannot put to sea—instead
  One here his vessel builds, another there
  Calks that which many voyages hath made;—

One strikes the prow—one hammers at the poop,
  One mends a main—and one a mizen sail,
  One makes an oar—another twists a rope;—
So, not by fire beneath, but art divine,
  Boil'd up thick pitch throughout the gloomy vale,
  Whose viscous spatterings all the margin line.
Nought on the surface of the boiling tide
  I saw save bubbles rise, and now and then
  The whole swell up—then settle and subside.
While down I gazed in one continued stare,
  Back on a sudden was I drawn again,
  My guide exclaiming: "Oh beware, beware!"
I turn'd around, like one who tardily
  Sees that, from which he needs escape must make,
  O'erwhelm'd with terror and perplexity—
To look not daring—all intent on flight:
  For in my rear I saw a devil black
  Come running swiftly o'er the rocky height.
Alas how fierce and savage was his face!
  How frightful too the gestures he display'd!
  Stretch'd were his wings, and rapid was his pace.
His shoulders, proudly rising and acute,
  Were laden with a miserable shade;
  And hard he grasp'd the sinew of his foot.

" O Malebranche of our bridge, lo one,"
Quoth he, " of Santa Zita's Elders here:
Haste—plunge him under;—I return anon
To that same town which plenty more doth hold:
Except Bonturo all are barterers there,
And 'No' is quickly turn'd to 'Yes' for gold."
His load cast down—so swift he turn'd him back
O'er the rough rock, that never mastiff fleet
Sprang with such haste a flying thief to track.
The sinner sank, then rose with prostrate face,
Whilst from beneath the bridge the fiends repeat,
" Here hath the holy countenance no place;
Here swim you not as erst in Serchio's tide;
And if you relish not our hooks—take care
That in the boiling pitch your back you hide."
Then with a hundred hooks the wretch they maul,
And cry: " To dance in secret now prepare,
And pilfer if you can unseen by all."
So cooks instruct their menials, in the pot
With their long ladles to thrust down the stew,
From time to time, when it may chance to float.—
To me the master: " Lest it should be seen
That thou art here, conceal thyself from view;
Some rock will haply serve thee for a screen:

And let no insult fill thee with dismay
That may be offer'd me—prepared I go—
Aforetime have I been in like affray."
Beyond the bridge's head he then proceeded,
And when he reach'd the sixth embankment—lo!
A calm and dauntless countenance he needed.
With furious tempest, and with loud alarms,
As dogs rush forth on one of squalid looks,
Who sudden takes his stand, and asks for alms;
So from beneath the bridge—enraged and hot
Rush'd on my guide the demons with their hooks;
But he exclaim'd: "I charge you, touch me not:
Before ye cast your hooks my flesh to tear,
Let one of you come forth my speech to hear,
And then consider if to strike ye dare."
"Go, Malacoda—go!"—they all exclaim;
Whereat one moved, the rest remaining there;—
And—"What avails it?" cried he as he came.
"Believ'st thou, Malacoda, on my way
Thus far I had arrived," my master said,
"As yet unharm'd amid your hellish fray,
Unless the will divine had sanction given?
Let me proceed;—for through this region dread
That I should guide him is ordain'd in heaven."

Then in a moment fell his crest of pride,—
Down at his feet he dropt the iron hooks,
And to the others: "Strike him not," he cried.
To me my lord: "O thou who sittest there,
Conceal'd beneath the bridge among the rocks,
Now mayst thou come to me devoid of fear."
Him then with speed I strove to overtake;
When came the fiends with such precipitation,
I trembled lest their compact they should break.
So once I saw the infantry alarm'd,
Who left Caprona on capitulation,
Seeing so many foes around them arm'd.
Close to my guide attaching me, I stood
Much terrified—nor from their faces black
Turn'd I my eyes,—they boded nothing good.
Lowering their hooks, one to the other said,
"What think you if I touch him on the back?"
"Be sure you hit him," was the answer made.
The demon, who the while address'd my guide,
Turn'd on a sudden to the recreant fiend:—
"Scarmiglion, peace, I say—be still," he cried.
Then spake to us: "Ye travellers—be it known
That o'er the bridge no road may be obtain'd,
The sixth arch hence is wholly overthrown.

But if it please you farther to proceed,
Along this rock securely may ye hie,
Another bridge that's near will serve your need.
Just five hours later yesterday than this,
Twelve hundred three score years and six gone by,
The road was broken which leads down th' abyss,
And thither will I send some scouts of mine
To watch if any show themselves above;
Depart with them—they will not prove malign.
Come, Alichino—come!" exclaim'd he then,
" Cagnazzo, Calcabrina, quickly move;
And Barbariccia, thou conduct the ten.
Come, Libicocco, Draghinazzo fell,
Ciriatto arm'd with tusks, and Graffiacan,
Thou furious Rubicant, and Farfarell
Make good your search around the boiling pitch,
And lead these safely to that bridge, whose span
Unbroken runs o'er all th' adjoining ditch."
" Master," I said, " O what is this I see?
Our way without an escort let us find;
Thou know'st it well—I ask no guide but thee:
If, as is wont, thou art quick sighted now,
Canst thou not see them how their teeth they grind,
And scowl upon us with a threatening brow?"

And he to me: "I charge thee not to fear;
E'en let them grind their savage teeth accurst,—
They do it at the suffering spirits here."
O'er the left pier their steps they then incline,
But to their leader every demon first
Put forth his tongue, as looking for a sign,—
When from behind, the sound of trumpet burst.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXII.

ARGUMENT.

THE Poets proceed, accompanied by the Demons, who with their hooks haul up Ciampolo, one of the barterers. His clever device to escape. Battle in consequence between two of the Demons.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXII.

Oft squadrons have I seen their station change,
  Rush to the charge, or suddenly retreat,
  And swift advancing o'er the country range.
Thy plains, Arezzo, oft have I survey'd
  Hastily swept by light-arm'd horsemen fleet;
  Oft been, where tilts and tournaments were play'd;—
(Now bells, now trumpets sounding forth alarms,
  Now drums and signals with tremendous din,
  Native or foreign, summoning to arms;)
But ne'er to such strange instrument of war
  Or horse or foot advancing have I seen;
  Or vessel tack by sign from land or star.

With the ten demons onward then we pass'd;
  Ah! what a fierce and savage company!
  But saints at church, and gluttons at a feast.
Still on the boiling pitch I gazed with care,
  Desirous all that it contain'd to see,
  And watch the spirits who were burning there.
As dolphins heave their backs above the wave
  Prognosticating angry tempests black—
  Signal to mariners their ship to save;
So, to alleviate th' excessive pain,
  From time to time each sinner raised his back,
  But swift as lightning 'twas conceal'd again.
As, in a trench, frogs at the water's side
  Sit squatting—with their noses raised on high,
  So that their feet and all their bulk they hide;
Thus upon either hand the sinners stood:
  But Barbariccia now approaching nigh,
  Quick they withdrew beneath the boiling flood.
I saw—and still my heart is thrill'd with fear—
  One spirit linger, as beside a ditch
  One frog remains, the others disappear;—
And Graffiacan, who nearest chanced to be,
  With grapple seized his hair all stiff with pitch;
  Thus pendent, like an otter eke was he.

(I knew the names of all the demons now,
For I had mark'd them when they chosen were,
And, as they call'd each other, listen'd how.)
" O Rubicant, look well, and see you place
Your hooks aright, that they his back may tear,"
Cried all at once th' inexorable race.
" Master," I said, " persuade them to disclose,
If so thou canst, who is that ill-starr'd shade
Thus fall'n within the clutches of his foes."
My guide accordingly approach'd him, and
Enquiry of his birth and country made.
" Navarre," he answer'd, " was my native land.
My mother placed me servant to a lord;
(For she had borne me to a desperate man,
Who spent his goods, then closed his life abhorr'd.)
King Thibault good I served in aftertime,
And there the trade of bartering I began,
Which now I pay for in this scalding slime."
Ciriatto, whose fell mouth, e'en like a boar,
A savage tusk on either side display'd,
Soon let him feel how cleverly they tore.
To wicked cats the mouse had fall'n a prey;—
But Barbariccia caught him up, and said,
" While I transfix him, stand ye all away."

Then to my master turn'd he round his face: 61
Exclaiming: "Ask whatever pleaseth thee,
Before another doth his form deface."
"Now, 'mid the other sinners," quoth my guide,
"Say, know'st thou any one from Italy
Beneath the pitch?" "But lately," he replied,
"I quitted one who lived that country near: 67
Could I rejoin him in yon sheltering flood,
Nor piercing hook nor talon should I fear."
Quoth Libicocco: "Not so much delay:"
An arm then seizing in his pincers rude,
He maul'd it, till he rent a part away.
And Draghignazzo would have lent a hook, 73
And torn his leg; but lo! their chief turn'd round,
And check'd his malice with a threatening look.
When somewhat was their vehemence restrain'd;—
To him who still was looking at his wound,
My guide without delay made this demand:
"Who was that other spirit, from whose side 79
Hither thou lately cam'st in evil hour?"
"The friar Gomita was it," he replied,—
"He of Gallura, vessel of all fraud,
Who, when his master's foes were in his power,
So treated them, that all his name applaud:

Gold he received, and let his prisoners free;
In each employ where he could use deceit
The very prince of barterers was he.
With him too Michael Zanche doth reside;
For them Sardinia is a subject sweet,
With which their tongues are never satisfied.
Ah me!—behold how grins the other fiend!
More would I say; but fear my tongue hath bound,
Lest he prepare his irons to extend."
To Farfarello turn'd their savage lord,
Who roll'd, in act to strike, his eyes around,
And said: "Go, get thee gone, ill bird abhorr'd."
"Tuscans or Lombards would'st thou wish to see,"
Again resumed the spirit thrill'd with fear,
"Tell me, and I will make them come to thee:
But for a season let these fiends retreat,
That thus the timorous souls may reappear,—
I where I am remaining in my seat:
For in my stead, seven will I make to rise,
When I shall whistle, as a sign to them
To venture forth,—for such our custom is."
Turn'd up his nose Cagnazzo, and exclaim'd,
Shaking his head: "Hear what malicious scheme
To cast himself below, the cheat hath framed."

Whence he, who had at hand a precious store
Of wiles, replied: "Malicious sure am I,
To make my own companions smart the more."
Then burst forth Alichin, inflamed with heat
Against the rest: "Plunge, if thou dare to try;—
I shall not follow thee with speed of feet,
But wings shall bear me o'er the boiling pitch:
Let's hie behind the bank, and we shall see
If thou alone canst all of us o'erreach."
Now for fresh sport, O ye who read, prepare.
Each from the bank his eyes withdrew;—first he
Who offer'd chief resistance to the snare.
Well chose his time the sinner of Navarre;
Fixt firm his feet—leapt down—and in a trice
Forth from their chieftain's hands escaped afar.
Each demon instantly with rage was fraught,
He most, who had encouraged this device;
Wherefore he flew, exclaiming: "Thou art caught."
But futile his attempt,—the speed of fear
E'en wings could not o'ertake:—one dived below,
Up came the other from his vain career.
Thus, when the falcon swoops his wings in air,
The duck dives instant, and eludes the blow;
Back turns the weary falcon in despair.

Him Calcabrina follow'd, in despite
  Thus to be duped, yet still so fair a cause
  Of quarreling afforded vast delight;
And since no more the barterer there he view'd,
  On his companion straight he turn'd his claws:
  A mighty struggle o'er the trench ensued.
But Alichino was a hawk well tried,
  And proved himself superior:—fell the twain
  Down to the middle of the boiling tide.
The heat soon parted them within the ditch,
  But all attempt to raise themselves was vain;
  Like birdlime glued their wings th' adhesive pitch.
Now Barbariccia, grieving with his band,
  Sent four across the stream, their aid to bear
  With many a hook; and they at his command
Full rapidly proceeded to their post.
  They stretch'd their hooks to aid the entangled pair,
  Who now were burning in the glowing crust;
And we advancing, left them floundering there.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

DANTE is saved by Virgil from the demons who pursue them. In the sixth chasm are punished the Hypocrites, who are condemned to pace continually round the gulph under the pressure of cloaks which are gilt without, but lined inside with lead. Catalano. Loderingo. Caiaphas. Annas.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXIII.

Silent and slow our lonely path we trod,
The one before, the other close behind,
Like minor friars proceeding on their road.
On Æsop's fable were my thoughts employ'd,—
How (this encounter brought it to my mind,)
The frog and mouse were by the kite destroy'd.
For greater likeness bear not yes and yea,
Than, if attentively compared they be,
From first to last these scenes of strife display.
As from one thought another oft will start,
So rose from this another presently,
Which with redoubled terror fill'd my heart.

For I consider'd:—Mock'd and taunted thus— 13
And we the cause;—full surely they have ground
To feel annoy, and will be wroth with us.
If to ill-will be added rage, I fear
They will pursue, more vengeful than the hound
Who gripes within his teeth some timid hare.
E'en now my locks stood bristling with affright, 19
As I intently listen'd in the rear;
"O master," I exclaim'd: "the demon's spite
Fills me with dread, unless thou canst conceal
Thyself and me; behold! they now are near,
And I already seem their hooks to feel."
"Were I a mirror, not thine outward face 25
Should I," he said, "more speedily receive,
Than doth my soul thy inward wish embrace.
Thy thought e'en now assimilates to mine,
And so alike th' expression which they give,
That I from both have form'd the same design.
If on the right, the bank is so inclined, 31
That to the chasm adjoining we may hie,
This fancied chase we soon shall leave behind."
Scarce had he time his counsel to suggest,
Ere I beheld the fiends approaching nigh,
With wings outspread, our progress to arrest.

In haste my leader caught me in his arm,
Like to a mother waken'd by a cry,
Who seeing flames around her—in alarm
Seizes her son, intent on flight alone,
Caring for him much more than for herself—
Around her but a single garment thrown.
Down from the summit of the rocky bank
Supine he cast him to that pendent shelf,
Which to the next partition form'd a flank.
So quickly never water urged its course
To turn a mill, in narrow sluice compress'd,
Where nearest to the spokes it rolls with force,—
As o'er that ridge my master hasten'd on,
Clasping me closely to his sheltering breast,
Not as a comrade, but a darling son.
Scarce had his feet attain'd the rocky bed,
When on the height above, to sight confest,
The fiends appear'd; but nought had we to dread.
For that supreme omniscient Providence,
Which gave the fifth partition to their sway,
Forbade them ever to depart from thence.
Pacing around with weary steps and slow,
A painted tribe of spirits I survey,
Whose haggard looks express fatigue and woe.

Cloaks had they on, with hoods which reach'd low down
Before their eyes, like those in fashion made,
Worn by the cloister'd brethren at Cologne.
Outside—with dazzling gold they glitter'd bright;
Inside—so lined were they with ponderous lead,
That Frederick's cloaks compared to them were light:
O cumbersome to all eternity!
Still on the left with them we took our road,
Intent upon their hopeless misery;
But they so slowly did their way pursue,
Opprest beneath th' insufferable load,
That at each step our company was new.
Wherefore I said; "O master, look around,
And point out some one in this realm of pain,
Whom I may know, by deeds or name renown'd."
Then of my Tuscan language one aware
Behind us cried: "Your steps awhile restrain,
O ye who hurry through the dusky air:—
Perhaps from me thou may'st obtain thy need."
On which my master turn'd, and said to me:
"Pause, and henceforward at his pace proceed."
I paused, and two I saw, whose visage show'd
Excessive eagerness with me to be,
But the weight hinder'd, and the narrow road.

When they arrived, they eyed me with a look
Askance, and full of wonder, silently;
Then turning, one the other thus bespoke.
" He by the action of his throat appears
Alive; if dead—what privilege has he,
That as he walks no weighty robe he bears?"
" O Tuscan, thou who comest," they exclaim,
" To this sad college of hypocrisy,
Deign to inform us what may be thy name."
I answer'd: " At that city was I born
Laved by fair Arno as she floweth by;
And this the body I have always worn.
But who are ye, whose grief adown your cheeks
Flows, as I see, with so profuse a tide?
And what affliction thus a passage seeks?"
" So overwhelming is the ponderous lead,
Which lines our orange mantles," one replied,
" That sighs burst hissing from the o'erbalanc'd head.
We both were from Bologna, joyous friars,
I Catalano, Loderingo he,—
Elected by your country for umpires,
As some unbiass'd man is by the state
Oft chosen to keep peace;—and such were we,
As round Gardingo may be witness'd yet."

"Friars," I began, "your vile hypocrisies". . . 109
But check'd myself; for lo! one crucified,
And staked to earth, appear'd before my eyes.
On seeing me, throughout his frame he writhed:—
Friar Catalan, who straight his plight descried,
As through his beard with many a sigh he breath'd,
Exclaim'd: "Before thee lies transfix'd, the shade 115
Who counsel gave, that for the people's weal
It was expedient one to death be led.
Prostrate he lies and naked on the road,
As thou behold'st, and 'tis his fate to feel
Each traveller's weight, and groan beneath the load.
In the same ditch his Father Annas lies, 121
And all the rest who of that counsel were,
Which to the Jews caused such calamities."
Then saw I Virgil marvelling awhile,
To see him stretch'd so despicably there,
And doom'd for ever to such base exile.
Next of the friar he sought intelligence: 127
"Unless ye are forbidden—tell," he said,
"If on the right lies any opening hence,
By which we both in safety may retire,
And leave the baleful pit, nor ought of aid
From the black angels on our road require?"

He answer'd him: "More near than you suppose,
From the main circle juts a rocky bridge,
Whose arch o'er all the deep entrenchment goes:
Here it is broken, and no passage lends:
But ye may clamber o'er its ruin'd ridge,
Which in a heap above the foss extends."
With head inclined, awhile my leader stood,
Then said: "Ill did he answer to our need,
Who with his hooks there rends the sinful crowd."
To him the friar: "Much of the devil's vice
I at Bologna heard;—and this indeed—
'He is a liar, and father of all lies.'"
With mighty strides my guide indignant sped,
Anger depicted somewhat on his face:
Wherefore I left these souls oppress'd by lead,
The much loved footsteps of my guide to trace.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXIV.

ARGUMENT.

DANTE is alarmed at the appearance of Virgil, whose countenance betrays his fears. He receives comfort and assistance from his guide; and with great difficulty is enabled to reach the seventh division, where thieves are persecuted by a swarm of serpents. Among these he meets with Vanni Fucci of Pistoia, who predicts the calamities of that city and of Florence.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXIV.

In the new year, when Sol his tresses gay
  Dips in Aquarius, and the tardy night
  Divides her empire with the lengthening day,—
When o'er the earth the hoar frost pure and bright
  Assumes the image of her sister white,
  Then quickly melts before the genial light—
The rustic, now exhausted his supply,
  Rises betimes—looks out—and sees the land
  All white around, whereat he strikes his thigh—
Turns back—and grieving—wanders here and there,
  Like one disconsolate and at a stand;
  Then issues forth, forgetting his despair,

For lo ! the face of nature he beholds
  Changed on a sudden,—takes his crook again,
  And drives his flocks to pasture from the folds.
With such alarm the master fill'd my breast,
  When I observed his scared and alter'd mien,
  And with such speed the mischief he redrest ;
For when we reach'd the broken bridge, my guide
  Turn'd himself to me with as sweet a look
  As when I first beheld him by my side :
The rugged steep minutely he survey'd,
  And counsel with himself awhile he took,
  Then in his arms upbore me undismay'd.
And like a man who on some work employ'd
  Looks in advance beyond the present hour ;
  So he, whilst o'er one crag my weight he buoy'd,
Still tow'rds another cast his eager eye,
  Exclaiming : " Grasp that firm : but first be sure,
  That on its strength thou fully may'st rely."
Not this a road for those whose garments flaunt ;
  For he though light, and I assisted on
  From ledge to ledge, could scarce with labour mount.
And if the rugged path of our ascent
  Had not been shorter than the adjoining one,
  His fate I know not—I had been o'erspent :

But Malebolge, since throughout it lies
  Tow'rds the deep gulf of hell all sloping down,
  One side of every valley thus must rise—
The other fall. At last we forced our way
  Up to the summit, where the highest stone,
  Torn from the broken ridge, before us lay.
So failed the breath within my lungs, what time
  I reach'd the height, that on a crag I sate,
  No strength remaining other rocks to climb.
" Now must thou shake off sloth," my guide began;
  " For not beneath rich canopies of state,
  On beds of down, must fame be sought by man:
He who descends unhonour'd to the grave
  Leaves of himself on earth such vestige slight,
  As smoke in air, or foam upon the wave.
Arise then, and o'er sloth a conquest gain
  By strength of mind, which wins in every fight,
  Unless the body's cumbrous weight restrain.
A longer flight of steps thou yet must scale;
  'Tis not enough these perils to have pass'd;—
  If well thou mark me, let my words avail."
Then I arose, and with my voice display'd
  Far better lungs than I in truth possess'd;
  " Let's on—for I am bold and nought dismay'd."

Among the rocks our upward course we bent,
Through craggy paths, confined, and dangerous,
And steeper than before was the ascent.
Still by the way, for fear of seeming weak,
I held discourse; when from the other foss
Came presently a voice unapt to speak:
I know not what it said, although I stood
High on the arch which spans that fearful ground;
But he who spake appear'd in angry mood.
I stoop'd me downward; but with life endued
Mine eyes pierced not the gloomy pit profound;
Wherefore I said: "O master, it were good,
Descending by the wall, this round to leave;
For hence I hear, but do not understand,
So down I see, but nought do I perceive."
"My answer is—to do thy will"—he said;
"For every modest and sincere demand
Deserves fulfilment, not in word, but deed."
The bridge we then descended from the height,
Where to the eighth embankment it is join'd;
And thence appear'd the baleful pit in sight.
Within—a crowd of serpents I behold,
So hideous and diversified in kind,
That at the very thought my blood runs cold.

Not even Lybia, with her fruitful sand,
More Cenchris, and more Jaculi can boast,
Or Amphisbæna, in her scorching land;
Though Ethiopia also should have brought
Her many plagues; and Egypt's pregnant coast
Add all the pests with which her soil is fraught.
Among this swarm, most loathsome to survey,
Ran spirits naked, and with terror pale:
No hiding place, no heliotrope had they.
Their hands with serpents were behind them bound;
These through their loins thrust forth the head and tail,
Which meeting in the front were coil'd around.
Lo, near the bank, on which our feet we stay'd,
A serpent rose, and pierced the form of one,
Where to the neck is join'd the shoulder blade.
So quickly ne'er was written O, or I,
As he took fire and burnt, and falling prone,
Was turn'd to ashes instantaneously.
While thus upon the ground his dust was strew'd,
Spontaneous it collected on the plain,
And suddenly its former shape renew'd.
So—as by mighty sages we are told,
The Phœnix dies, and springs to life again,
When o'er her head five hundred years have roll'd:

For her, nor blade, nor herb supply their food;
But amomum and tears of frankincense,
And myrrh and spikenard form her latest shroud.
And e'en as one who falls, he knows not how,
Drawn down by demon force that mars his sense,
Or other violence that lays him low,—
When he arises, turns his eyes around—
All stupified with anguish, and at gaze,
Stands as distracted, uttering sighs profound;
So that vile sinner speedily arose.
Oh how severe the justice God displays,
Inflicting in his wrath such deadly blows!
What was his name enquired my faithful guide:
" Not long ago, rain'd down from Tuscany,
I came to this dire gullet," he replied:
" I led the life of beasts and not of men—
Mule that I was; my name is Vanni Fucci.
And foul Pistoia was my worthy den."
I to my guide: " entreat him to remain,
And ask the crime for which he here is pent;
I knew him erst, defiled with bloody stain."
Dissembled not the thief when this was said,
But straight to me his soul and look he bent,
With melancholy hue of shame o'erspread:

And thus he spoke: "It gives me greater grief
That thou hast found me in this wretched hole,
Than all I felt, when I was torn from life:
Thy wishes I no longer can deny:
Here am I thrust so low because I stole
The hallow'd treasures of the sacristy:
One who was innocent incurred the blame.
If ever from this pit releas'd thou be,
Lest aught of joy thou reap for this my shame—
Open thine ears, and hear what I declare:
First shall the Neri from Pistoia flee;
Her race and laws shall Florence then forswear.
From Valdimagra Mars collects around
A vapour, wrapt with clouds o'ercharged and fell;
Which thence, with tempest fierce, and angry sound,
Shall clash in fury on Piceno's plain;
Whence suddenly the cloud it shall dispel,
And each Bianco in the field be slain:
This, to o'erwhelm thee with despair, I tell."

INFERNO.

CANTO XXV.

ARGUMENT.

The blasphemy of Fucci: he is seized by serpents; and, endeavouring to escape, is pursued by Cacus in the form of a Centaur, who is described with a swarm of serpents on his haunch, and a dragon on his shoulders, breathing forth fire. Our Poet then meets with the spirits of three of his countrymen, two of whom undergo a most marvellous transformation in his presence.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXV.

His speech thus closed, the thief insultingly
Pointed his hands in scornful gesture vile,
Exclaiming: "Take them, God, they are for thee."
I from that instant was the serpent's friend;
For one about his throat enwreath'd its coil,
As though it said: "No more shalt thou offend."
Another clasp'd his arms; and with a chain
Of many a fold so tightly bound them down,
That all attempt to move them was in vain.
Pistoia! ah Pistoia! why forbear
To bow thee in the dust, since thou art grown
More rife in crime than e'en thy fathers were?

No soul throughout the murky rounds of hell
Tow'rds God beheld I manifest such pride;—
Not he, from Thebes' high battlements who fell.
He fled—nor spoke again:—then did I see
A Centaur coming, full of rage, who cried:
"This impious, foul blasphemer—where is he?"
More snakes were hissing on his turgid hip
Than in Maremma's marsh may be survey'd,
E'en reaching upwards to his very lip.
Behind the neck, upon his shoulder, lay
A dragon fierce, with ample wings outspread,
Breathing forth fire on all who cross'd his way.
"Cacus is this," my faithful master said,
"Who in the cave of Aventine erewhile
A lake of blood full many times hath made.
Not with his brethren doth he onward hie,
Robber accurst,—since he with secret guile
Drove off the mighty herd which pastured nigh.
But ceased his deeds of evil, when were dealt
A hundred blows by the Herculean mace;
Though scarcely ten perhaps the robber felt."
While thus he spake, the Centaur fled;—and lo!
Three souls beneath us came at rapid pace,
Whom neither I nor Virgil saw till now;

When on a sudden, "Who are ye?" they cry;
Wherefore we ceased discoursing as we went,
And fix'd on them alone our eager eye.
I knew them not; but so it did befall,
(As often happens by some accident,)
That one had need another's name to call,
Exclaiming: "Where can Cianfa be conceal'd?"
Whereat, my guide's attention to engage,
Straightway my finger to my lip I held.
No wonder, reader, should'st thou disbelieve
What now will be unfolded in my page,
For I who saw it scarce can credit give.
Whilst upon them mine eyes attentive hung,
A serpent with six feet like lightning sped
Full in the front of one, and to him clung.
His middle feet he round his paunch did wreathe,
And o'er his arms his foremost feet outspread;
Then fix'd in either cheek his savage teeth.
Stretch'd o'er the thighs the hinder feet extend,
And 'twixt them both protruded he his tail,
Which, backwards turn'd, along the reins remain'd.
So closely ne'er did circling ivy bind
An aged tree, as round those members fell
The horrid beast his own dire form entwined.

Then were they mingled, e'en as they had been
Of melted wax, in selfsame hues array'd;
And which was which no longer could be seen:
Like as when paper burns, there glides before
The advancing flame a brown and dingy shade,
Which is not black, and yet is white no more.
In wonder lost the other two look'd on,
And cried: "Agnello, oh how altered thou!
Behold thou art not either two or one."
The twain already to a single head
Were changed;—one face appear'd instead of two,
For no distinction could be now survey'd.
Two arms were visible where four had been;
The thighs, the legs, the belly, and the chest
Became such limbs as never yet were seen.
All vestige of the former shape was gone;
Nor one, nor two th' unsightly frame express'd;
And in such guise it moved full slowly on.
As underneath the dog-star's scorching ray,
The lizard, darting swift from hedge to hedge,
Appears like lightning if he cross the way;—
So, to the stomach of the other twain,
A viper came, with furious heat and rage,
Livid and black, like to a pepper grain:

And in that part whence first our nutriment
Is drawn, he sudden pierced one spirit vile,
Then prostrate fell in all his foul extent.
Him view'd the transfixt spirit, but was dumb,
And standing motionless, he yawn'd the while,
As if by sleep or fever overcome.
He on the serpent, it on him did look;
One from his wound, the other hard and strong
Breath'd from his mouth, and mingling met the smoke.
Now let Nasidius' and Sabellus' fate
No more be made a boast in Lucan's song,
But let him list the tale I here relate.
Silent be Ovid;—though his poetry
Changed Arethusa to a fount of yore,
And Cadmus to a snake, I have no jealousy.
For ne'er two natures changed he face to face,
So that they both were gifted with the power
Each other's form and substance to embrace.
Their limbs in such exact accordance meet,
That to a fork his tail the serpent cleft;
The wounded shade united both his feet.
Connected each with each, the legs and thighs
So closely clung, that soon, combined, they left
No trace of junction to our wondering eyes.

The cloven tail that shape did now assume
Lost by the other; soft one's skin was wrought,
Meanwhile the other's harden'd in its room.
Arms into armpits enter'd—strange to view;
And the two feet which of the beast were short,
Extended as the other's shorter grew.
His hinder feet, now twisted into one,
To undergo mysterious change were seen;
And to two feet the other's alter'd soon.
Meanwhile the smoke with its dense vapour veils
Both with fresh hues, and generates a skin
Upon one part, which from the other peals.
The serpent rose;—the man fell down below:
Still on each other all the while they gazed,
Their eyes alone unaltered:—to his brow
Backward the one his baleful visage drew,
And thence from the superfluous matter raised,
On either side, the ears spontaneous grew.
That superfluity which still remain'd
A nostril to the impious face was made;
And the two lips their proper size attain'd.
He who lay prostrate, now prolongs his face,
Contracting both his ears within his head,
E'en as a snail draws in his horns apace.

The tongue, which, undivided, freely spoke,
  Divideth—while the forked tongue anon
  Unites, and straightway vanisheth the smoke.
The soul, transform'd into a brute, now flies
  Hissing along the vale; the other one
  Foams at the mouth, as in the rear he hies.
Scornful he turn'd on him his shoulders new,
  And to another spake; "As I have done,
  Let Buoso crawling now his way pursue."
Such changes did the seventh round present;
  And in the novelty excuse I find,
  If here my tongue decline embellishment.
And though confusion overwhelm'd mine eye,
  And much bewilder'd also was my mind,
  These shades could not escape so secretly,
But well I mark'd that Puccio, he was one;
  And of the three first comers, he alone
  Among them all no change had undergone:
The other's death thou, Gaville, dost atone.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

DANTE reproaches Florence in an ironical strain, on meeting with five of his countrymen among the thieves. Remounting the steps which the poets had descended to the seventh gulf, they proceed to the arch that stretches over the eighth; and from thence behold numerous flames, in which are punished evil counsellors. Diomed and Ulysses:—the latter relates his adventures and the manner of his death.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXVI.

Exult, O Florence, in so great a fame! 1
Your wings are waving over land and sea;
And e'en through hell resounds your mighty name.
Among the robbers I discover'd five,—
Your citizens,—five such—it shameth me;
Nor great the reputation you derive.
But if, as morning rises, dreams are true, 7
Erelong you shall experience all the ill
That Prato and your neighbours wish for you:
Were it arrived, 'twould give my mind relief:
I wish it were, since come at last it will;
As age advances, more will be my grief.

Departing, we ascend a staircase rude,
Carved in the rock down which we lately went:
My guide preceded—I his steps pursued.
Wending our way, thus desolate and lone,
Mid rugged crags and dire impediment,
We grasp'd with feet and hands the jutting stone.
Then did I grieve, and now I grieve again,
When I consider what there met mine eyes;
And, more than I am wont, my mind restrain,
Lest, uncontroul'd by virtue, it be driven;
And I abuse those better qualities,
Or favouring star, or higher power hath given.
What time the sun least hides his glorious face,
And with his lustre gilds the glowing sky,
When to the gnat the buzzing fly gives place;—
As many fire-flies as the rustic sees
Down in the vale, where field and vineyard lie,
Whilst on the hill his limbs recline at ease;
With flames so numerous shone, all gleaming bright,
The eighth abyss, as I discern'd, when near
We drew, and of the bottom gain'd a sight.
As he, whose wrongs did savage bears resent,
Beheld from earth depart Elijah's car,
By fiery steeds borne up heaven's steep ascent,—

And as its course he follow'd with his eye,
Nought could perceive except the flame alone,
Ascending like a little cloud on high;—
So moved each flame at the entrance of the cave;
And none its prey disclosed;—yet every one
A furtive shelter to some sinner gave.
When looking down, I bent me o'er the bridge,—
Though none impell'd, I should have fall'n below,
Had I not firmly grasp'd a rocky ridge.
My guide, who saw me thus attentive, cried:
" Within the fires are spirits rack'd by woe,
Who in this scorching garb their persons hide."
" Master," I said, " thy words have from my mind
All doubt removed;—that so it was, erewhile
I fancied, and to tell thee felt inclined.
Whose flame is that before us, cleft in twain,
Which seems as if uprising from the pile,
Where lay Eteocles and his brother slain?"
" Ulysses," answer'd he, " and Diomed
Within are tortured: and with equal course
Hasten to pain, as erst to wrath they sped:
Pent in one flame, the treacherous horse they rue,
That fatal ambuscade, the destin'd source
From which their noble seed the Romans drew:—

There mourn the fraud, whence, though bereft of life,
Deïdamia doth Achilles wail;
And Troy's Palladium too augments their grief."
" If they within these fires may speak," I cried,
" I pray thee now,—and let this prayer avail—
This single prayer for thousand prayers beside;—
Here for awhile thy progress to delay,
Until the horned flame approacheth nigh:—
Behold how anxiously I bend that way."
To me he answer gave: " Full well thy prayer
Deserves my praise, and therefore I comply;
But from addressing them thyself forbear:
Be mine to speak—for I already know
What thou would'st say;—these Grecians, in their pride,
Might not on thee perhaps their words bestow."
Then when the flame was seen that place to reach
Which seem'd appropriate to my faithful guide,
In words like these I heard him frame his speech.
" Ye spirits twain, within one fire contain'd,—
Your gratitude, however slight the share,
If e'er while living on the earth I gain'd,
What time I sung my lofty minstrelsy,—
Here tarry; and let one of you declare,
Where self-devoted he lay down to die."

The larger horn of that old flame began
To curl itself, and then in murmurs broke,
E'en like a fire the labouring breezes fan:
And now the summit, waving here and there,
As though it were a living tongue that spoke,
Threw forth a voice, which burst upon mine ear.
"On leaving Circe, who detain'd me more
Than twelve full months, Gaieta's headland near,
Ere yet Eneas thus had named the shore;—
Nor fondness for my son, nor care for thee,
My aged sire, nor love's requital dear,
To fill with joy thy heart, Penelope,
Could in my mind the strong desire arrest
To learn experience in the affairs of man;—
What virtues, and what vices rule his breast.
O'er the deep waters of the boundless main,
In one lone bark, my course I dauntless ran,
With the few faithful friends that form'd my train.
As far as Spain I either coast descried,
Far as Morocco and Sardinia's shore,
And other isles wash'd by that circling tide.
Aged and slow, our manly strength impair'd—
Now onward to that distant strait we bore,
Where Hercules his pillars hath uprear'd,

Lest man presume to pass the barrier dread.
Seville was left behind us on our right;
On the other hand was Ceuta lost in shade.
'Comrades,' I said, 'who now have reach'd the west,
And won your way through perils infinite,—
Short is the space ere all will be at rest;
Let each then rouse his drooping energies
That land without inhabitants to find—
Still unexplor'd, which to the westward lies.
Bear your illustrious origin in view;
For not to live like brutes were ye design'd,
But knowledge high and virtue to pursue!'
This brief oration, to my comrades made,
Avail'd so much their ardour to excite,
It could not afterwards have been allay'd.
When we had turn'd the poop to face the east,
We strain'd our oars to wing our foolish flight;
And thus proceeding gain'd upon the west.
The stars that o'er the other pole are spread
That night I saw, while our's was so deprest,
It rose not higher than the ocean's bed.
Five times the moon had shed her brightest ray,
As oft was robb'd of her transparent vest,
Since first we enter'd on our mighty way—

When, dim in distance, rear'd its brow on high
A mountain—which, now bursting on our view,
Appear'd the loftiest that e'er met mine eye.
Great was our joy—a joy soon turn'd to woe;
For, rushing from the land unknown and new,
A whirlwind sprang, and struck the vessel's prow:
Thrice did it drive the ship and waters round;
The poop ascended as the fourth wave rose;
The prow lay buried in the depth profound,
And o'er our heads Heaven bade the sea to close."

INFERNO.

CANTO XXVII.

ARGUMENT.

COUNT Guido di Montefeltro, another evil counsellor, holds a conversation with Dante from within the fire. The Count attributes his wretched fate to the artful persuasions of Pope Boniface, who had promised him absolution for the crime he required him to commit.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXVII.

Now calm and tranquil rose the flame on high,
  Its speech concluded—and was moving on,
  Since the sweet poet gave it liberty,—
When from behind, another came in sight,
  Which, sending forth a low tumultuous moan,
  Our eyes attracted to its curling height.
As the Sicilian bull (which roar'd of old
  First with his shrieks, as justly came to pass,
  Whose cruel hand had wrought the monstrous mould)
Rebellow'd loudly with the sufferer's cry,
  So that, all fashion'd as it was of brass,
  It seem'd to be transpierced by agony;

Thus—at the first, no way or outlet found
From 'mid th' enclosing fire—the words of woe
Into its language changed their proper sound.
But when, a passage won, the flames display'd
Their summits—quivering, as the tongue below
Imparted the direction they obey'd—
These words broke forth: "O thou, to whom I speak,
In Lombard phrase but lately heard to say:
'Thou may'st depart—from thee no more I seek'—
Though somewhat tardily to thee I came,
Grieve not to pause and hold discourse, I pray;
Thou seest it grieves not me, though wrapt in flame.
If to this glooming world thou hast of late
Been hurried downward from fair Italy,
That land belov'd, whence all my crimes I date—
Say, if Romagna is at peace or war?
For from the hills that 'twixt Urbino lie
And those whence Tiber springs, my birth I draw."
Still was I bending down to hear the flame,
When suddenly mine escort touch'd my side,
Saying: "Speak thou, for he from Latium came."
And I, whose answer was already framed,
Without delay obey'd my faithful guide:
"O thou secreted spirit!" I exclaim'd,—

" Devoid of war within her tyrant's breast
Romagna is not now, nor e'er hath been;
But when I left her, war was then suppress.
Unchanged for many years remains Ravenna's land;
There broods Polenta's eagle, so that e'en
O'er Cervia too its ample wings expand.
In Forli, which such long resistance made,
And drench'd the ground with streams of Frenchmen's blood,
The green arms of the Lion are obey'd.
The mastiffs of Verucchio, young and old,
Whose hands, with slaughter stain'd, Montagna rued,
Pierce with their teeth, and suck the prey they hold.
There where Santerno and Lamone glide,
The Lion of the snowy field commands,
Who, each returning autumn, changes side.
That town, whose bank by Savio's stream is laved,
E'en as between the plain and mount she stands,
So liveth, partly free, and part enslaved.
But who thou art, I prithee, tell me now;
Be not more sullen than the rest;—so may
Thy name on earth uphold a lofty brow."
Then, when in its peculiar way had roar'd
The fire awhile, its top was seen to play
This way and that;—anon a blast it pour'd.

. .

" If I believed my answer would be made
To one who ever could the world regain,
This flame should rest in peace, nor more be sway'd;
But since no living soul, if true it be
What I have heard, e'er left this gulph of pain,—
Fearless of infamy, I answer thee.
A soldier once—I next around me tied
St. Francis' cord, in hopes to purge my crime;
And truly had those hopes been verified,
But that the mighty Priest, whom evil take,
Allured me to my sins a second time;
And how, and why I will relation make.
While flesh and bone encompass'd me around,
(My mother's gift,) my deeds resembled less
The lion than the fox:—such skill profound
In stratagems I show'd, and play'd my game
With so much wily craft and subtleness,
The world's far limits sounded with my fame.
But when I saw that time of life begin,
When every man, ariving near the port,
Should coil the ropes and take the canvass in;—
What first had pleased me, irksome seem'd to grow;
And to repentance and confession brought,
I had been blest;—alas, how wretched now!

The haughty prince of modern Pharisees,
  Who near the Lateran his fierce warfare waged,
  And not with Moors or Jewish enemies,
(For all were Christians whom his vengeful hand
  Opposed; and none had Acre's walls besieged,
  Or e'er had traffick'd in the Sultan's land,)
Regarded not his own exalted state
  And holy office, nor my sacred cord,
  Which should the form it girds attenuate:—
But, as of old, to cure his leprosy,
  Silvester was by Constantine implored;—
  So in a more commanding tone did he
Bid me to cure the fever of his pride:
  Counsel he ask'd, but as he seem'd to jest,
  To his demand an answer I denied.
Again he said to me: 'Be not afraid—
  I do absolve thee;—tell the means, how best
  May Pellestrino in the dust be laid.
Heaven, as thou know'st, I have the power at will
  To lock or unlock; hence the keys are twain,
  Which erst my predecessor prized so ill.'
Then had his cogent arguments full sway,
  When silence could procure me little gain;
  And I: 'O Father, since you wash away

The sin which now it needs I must commit;—
  Large be your promise—your performance slack,—
  Thus will you triumph in your lofty seat.'
When I was dead,—to bear my soul away
  Saint Francis came; but lo! a Cherub black
  Exclaim'd: 'Forbear—nor take my lawful prey;
Down must he go to where my servants are,
  Because he has of fraud the adviser been,
  Since which, my hand hath held him by the hair.
Nought but repentance ever can absolve;—
  But to repent, and yet incline to sin,
  A contradiction would in terms involve.'
Oh! with what anguish from him did I bound,
  When seizing me, he said: 'Perhaps you thought
  I was not a logician so profound.'
He carried me to Minos, who eight times
  Around him coil'd his tail, and bit it, fraught
  With mighty rage:—then said: 'His are the crimes
That meet their doom within th' encircling fire.'
  I therefore, as you see, am lost for aye,
  And thus enveloped, rove in torment dire."

When he had finish'd his discourse forlorn,
  The flame departed, moaning on its way,
  And writhing to and fro its sharpen'd horn.

Onward we pass'd—my guide and I behind,— 133
Till o'er the rock we reach'd another road,
Arching the foss, in which those souls are fined
Who bear the weight of all the strife they sowed.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

THEY arrive at the ninth gulf, where the sowers of scandal, schismatics, and heretics are seen with their limbs miserably mangled. Mahomet. Piero da Medicina. Curio. Mosca. Bertrand de Bornio.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXVIII.

Who, e'en in language unconstrained by rhyme,
Of all the blood and wounds I saw could speak,
Though he described their horrors many a time?
No tongue forsooth but in the attempt must fail—
Our mind too finite, and our speech too weak
To comprehend the woes I would detail.
If in Apulia's memorable land
Were all the grieving nations gather'd round,
Who met destruction by the Roman's hand,—
Or suffer'd by the sword in that long war,
When erst with golden rings the spoils were crown'd,
As Livy writes, whose history doth not err;—

Those nations also, who were doom'd to feel
  The grievous blows of Robert Guiscard bold;—
  Those others too, whose bones are gather'd still
At Ceperan, that saw th' Apulians fly—
  False to their lord; and where Alardo old
  Near Tagliacozzo won the victory;—
And all could show their suffering limbs, pierced through,
  Or lop't away;—nought were they to compare
  With what this ninth compartment gave to view.
A cask, split down the middle or the end,
  Gapes not so wide as one I witness'd there,
  Ripped from the chin to where the haunches bend.
Between his legs the entrails hung; meanwhile
  The midriff, and the opening paunch expands,—
  Receptacle of what is foul and vile.
With stedfast gaze I viewed his sad estate,
  When eying me, he tore him with his hands,
  And said: "Lo, how my side I lacerate.
Behold how Mahomet is rent in twain!
  Before me, mangled upwards from the chin
  E'en to the brow, walks Ali, rack'd with pain.
And all the others, whom thou seest forlorn,
  On earth sow'd seeds of scandal, and the sin
  Of schism incurr'd, and therefore thus are torn.

A devil is behind us, who bestows
These cruel wounds with sword of sharpest steel,
And as we pass, inflicts on each fresh blows,
Oft as we traverse this accursed strand;
For, ever and anon our gashes heal,
Ere we again in his dread presence stand.
But who art thou, whom on the rock I find
Thus musing?—haply wishing to delay
The pangs by heaven to thy misdeeds assign'd?"
" Death hath not struck him yet; nor is he led
By crime to punishment; but—that he may
Obtain experience full, I, who am dead,"
Replied the bard, " must his conductor be
Through the deep gulf of Hell from round to round:
This is as true as that I speak to thee.
More than a hundred, when they heard the news,
Paused to behold me from the trench profound;—
In wonderment forgetting all their woes.
" Thou who perhaps the sun wilt shortly see,
Exhort Friar Dolcin, that with store of food
(Unless he wish full soon to follow me,)
He arm himself; lest, strait'ned by the snow,
A triumph to Novara be allow'd
O'er him whom else he could not overthrow."

These words spake Mahomet to me—his foot
  Upraised—as if in action to proceed,
  Which, now departing, to the ground he put.
Another shade (who had his throat laid bare,
  And nose lopp'd off, e'en from the brows; and had
  Remaining but one solitary ear,
And with the rest in wonder lost had stood
  At gaze—) advancing foremost, now display'd
  His windpipe open'd and distain'd with blood.
" O thou whom guilt condemneth not," he cried,
  " And whom in Latium I have erst survey'd,
  (Unless too much the likeness hath belied)
On Pier da Medicina thought bestow,
  If thou once more that lovely plain behold,
  Which from Vercelli slopes to Mercabo.
And be these words to Fano's worthy twain,
  To Guido, and to Angiolello told;—
  That, if all foresight here is not in vain,
They near Cattolica shall overboard
  Be cast, and sunk in ocean, by the guile
  And wicked treachery of a tyrant lord.
So great a crime did never Neptune view,
  Betwixt Majorca and the Cyprian isle,
  By pirates wrought, or by an Argive crew.

That traitor vile with but a single eye,
(Who owns the fatal land a spirit here
Would wish, I deem he never had been nigh)
Them to a parley with him shall invite;
And so contrive, that neither vow nor prayer
Shall they require against Focara's might."
Then I: "Point out, and let the soul be seen,
(If upon earth you bid me speak of you)
Who to that land would fain he ne'er had been."
Raising his hand, he seized his comrade's cheek,
And opening wide his jaws, said: "Take a view
Of him you mention; lo! he cannot speak.
From Cæsar's mind this outcast took away
The doubt he felt, when he affirm'd forsooth,
'To men prepared 'tis fatal to delay!'"
Oh! how cast down was Curio, and dismay'd,
(His tongue uprooted from within his mouth)
Who erst so boldly this assertion made!
And one, who was deprived of either hand,—
Lifting the bleeding stumps amid the dun
Dense air, so that the gore his visage stain'd,—
Cried: "In thy mind let Mosca bear a place,
Who said,—(alas the day!) 'What's done is done;'
Words fraught with misery to the Tuscan race:"—

"And of thy house the ruin, let me add,"
Quoth I; whereat, redoubling moan on moan,
He sped, like one by sorrow struck, and mad.
I stood, still gazing on the band aloof,
And saw a thing I should have fear, alone
Thus to record, with want of other proof,
Unless my conscience made me feel secure—
That good companion, which makes bold the man
Whose breastplate is—to know his thoughts are pure.
I saw indeed, and still I seem to see
A trunk without its head, which onward ran,
Like others of this mournful company.
E'en by the hair he held the sever'd head,
Like to a lantern dangling in his hand;
While viewing us intent, "Ah me!" he said:
And thus unto himself a light was he;
And two in one and one in two I scann'd;
God only knows how such a thing could be.
When to the bridge's foot we had drawn near,
He raised his arm, and with it rear'd the head,
Its words thus bringing closer to our ear.
"Behold the agony in which I pine,
Thou, who still breathing visitest the dead:
Behold if any pangs can equal mine:

And that of me some tidings thou may'st take,— 133
Bertram de Bornio, be it known, am I,
Who urged King John rebellious war to make.
Father and son at enmity I set;
Nor did Achitophel with arts more sly
David and Absalom's resentment whet.
Because the bonds, by nature form'd, I burst, 139
My brain, alas! is sever'd from its source,
Which lies within this wretched trunk accurst:
Thus retribution doth pursue its course."

INFERNO.

CANTO XXIX.

ARGUMENT.

HAVING passed by Geri del Bello, a relation of Dante, they proceed into the tenth gulf, from which arise shrieks of woe, as from an hospital. Here are punished the Alchymists with divers diseases.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXIX.

The numerous tribes and various gashes deep
Had to the brim with tears so fill'd mine eyes,
I gladly would have stood awhile to weep.
But Virgil said to me; "Why gazest thou?
Why fix thy looks in melancholy guise
On the disfigured shades that lie below?—
Not so thy wont in any former cell:
But, if to count them all, thy wish may be,
Think—two and twenty miles extends the vale.
The moon already lies beneath our feet;
To journey on but little time have we;
And things as yet unseen thine eye will meet."

" Did'st thou," I answer'd him, " the reason weigh,
Why such a close attention I bestow'd,
Thou might'st perhaps have pardon'd my delay."
My guide mov'd on, as I this answer gave,
Behind him still continuing my road,
And adding this; " I deem within that cave,
Whereon my eyes were so intently bent,
Dwells a sad spirit, one to me allied,
Who rues his dear bought crimes with deep lament."
" Let not compassion for his woes detain
Thy pensive soul; but turn," exclaim'd my guide,
" To other objects; and let him remain,
Whom at the bridge's foot I chanced to see.
Pointing, and threat'ning thee with look enraged;
Geri del Bello, as I heard, was he.
With him, who er'st in Altafort bore sway,
Thy thoughts so wholly were the while engaged,
That Geri pass'd unnoticed on his way."
" His violent death, dear leader," I exclaim,
" Yet unavenged on earth by those who shared,
And still remain partakers of the shame,
Inspired his scorn;—so that in contumely
He silent pass'd, nor to accost me cared;
Hence for his fate I feel more sympathy."

Thus spake we till the next pit came in sight,
  Which from the bridge's summit would be view'd
  E'en to the bottom, were there stronger light.
O'er Malebolge's last sad cloister now
  Arriving, on the highest arch we stood,
  Whence its contents could all be seen below.
Here by discordant shrieks was I assail'd,
  Whose shafts were barb'd with pity; whence my hand,
  To close mine ears against them, I upheld.
As were the wailings, if—when autumn reigns,
  Each lazar house in sad Sardinia's land,
  In Valdichiana, and Maremma's plains
Forth in one trench could all their sufferers pour;
  Such here was heard;—and thence came stench as rank,
  As issues from foul wounds, and festerings sore.
The bridge now cross'd, we made our downward way,
  Still bearing to the left along the bank:
  Then more distinctly could mine eye survey
The deep abyss; where, rack'd by throes, appear
  The forgers, whom the handmaid of the Lord—
  Unerring Justice—dooms, and classes here.
With greater sorrow none could have beheld
  Ægina's race weigh'd down by plagues abhorr'd,
  (When with such pestilence the air was fill'd,

That every animal exhausted fell,
E'en to the little worm; and by the seed
Of emmets—so the fabling poets tell—
This ancient people was again renew'd,)
Than was my grief—when in the valley dread
The shades I saw, in numerous parcels strew'd:
One on another's breast—one on the back
Recumbent,—one all fours endured his pain,
Slow crawling forward o'er the mournful track.
Step after step we went, nor held debate,
But gazed upon the sick, who all in vain
Strove their enfeebled forms to elevate.
Seated were two, each other who sustain'd,
As pan props pan while heating on the fire,
From head to foot with leprous blotches stain'd.
No groom, who longs to hie him to his home,
Or hastens to fulfil his lord's desire,
E'er plied so rapidly the currycomb,
As each around him plied his nails amain;
So furious did the irritation seem;
And this the only aid they could obtain.
Thus the parch'd skin they drew off with the nail,
E'en as a knife scrapes off the coat from bream,
Or other fish that bears a larger scale.

My guide addressing one of them, began:
"O thou, who to relieve thee from annoy,
Usest thy nails like pincers now and then,
Tell me,—among the numbers here that lie,
Is any Latian soul?—to thy employ
So may thy nails suffice eternally."
"We, whom thou see'st thus mangled, from the land
Of Latium came," cried one in tones of grief;
"But who art thou who makest the demand?"
My escort said: "One am I, who descend
To guide this living soul from reef to reef;
And e'en through hell to lead him I intend."
Then started they asunder at the word,
And, in alarm, each trembling turn'd to me,
With others who the echoing voice had heard.
Now drew the gracious master to my side,
And whisper'd: "Say to them what pleaseth thee;"
I, thus beginning, with his wish complied;
"May your remembrance yet on earth survive,
Fresh in the thoughts of men, to your content,
Through many a year remaining still alive,
As ye may now your birth and race declare;
Nor let this foul disgusting punishment
Deter you from announcing who ye are."

"I from Arezzo hither came," one cried,
"By Albero of Sienna burnt;—though here
Not sent to expiate that for which I died.
'Tis true in joke I did to him profess
That I had learnt to wing my flight through air:
Vast were his wishes, but his wisdom less;
To learn my art was therefore his desire;
And since I made him not a Dædalus,
He had me burnt by his reputed sire.
But to the last dread chasm of all the ten
Unerring Minos doom'd me, for the use
I made of alchemy while living."—Then
I to the poet said: "Now half so vain
Was ever nation as these Siennese?
Not e'en the French so much so, I maintain."
Whereat the other leper made reply:
"Stricca indeed excepted—if you please,
Who used the goods of life so temperately;
And Nicholas—whose art first mix'd the fruit
Of cloves, prepared as a rich condiment,
Pluck'd from the garden where the plant took root.
Excepting also that illustrious crew,
'Mongst whom his woods and vineyards Caccia spent;
And—famed for wisdom—Abbagliato too.

But come;—towards me do thou direct thine eye,
To know who backs thee in thy argument;
And let my features grant thee a reply:
So shalt thou see I am Capocchio's shade,
Who metals could transmute by alchemy;
And thou, if well I have thy face survey'd,
Wilt know, that nature's practised ape was I."

INFERNO.

CANTO XXX.

ARGUMENT.

In the same gulf are punished Impostors of various kinds, coiners aud counterfeiters, who are afflicted with horrible diseases, fevers and dropsies. Gianni Scicchi. Myrrha. Sinon, and Adamo; between whom takes place a most comical dialogue.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXX.

What time, incensed against the Theban maid,
Juno pour'd out her wrath upon the land;—
That wrath the Goddess more than once display'd—
So lost to reason Athamas became,
That when he saw his wife, in either hand
Bearing a child, he furious did exclaim,
"Extend the nets, that at the pass I may
Enclose the lioness and both her young."
Then, stretching forth his talons to the prey,
He seized Learchus; and against a stone,
Insensate—dash'd him; while the mother sprung
Deep into ocean with her other son.—

Or, when by fortune humbled in the dust,
Troy, once all daring, was in ruin laid,
And, with his life, his kingdom Priam lost—
The wretched Hecuba, sad, captive queen,
When she Polixena a corpse survey'd,
And on the margin of the deep had seen
Her Polydorus—mournful interview!—
In frenzy bark'd, like to a dog;—so great
The power of grief her reason to subdue.
But never furies, whencesoe'er they came,
Trojan, or Theban—with such rancorous hate
Tormented beasts—much less the human frame,—
As two pale naked spirits that I saw,
Who, like a hog excluded from the sty,
Came running furiously with open jaw.
One seized Cappocchio's neck, and rent him sore
With fang unfix'd; then, as he drew him by,
Grated his belly o'er the rocky floor.
The Aretine, all trembling with alarm,
Said: " Gianni Schicchi is the one you see,
Who roves infuriate, working other's harm."
" Oh," I exclaim'd, " may ne'er the other sprite
Tear with his fangs thy back, as thou to me
Tell who it is, ere hurried from our sight."

Then answer'd he; " Know, Myrrha is her name—
That wicked one, who cherish'd in her breast
For her own father an unhallow'd flame.
Her wicked purpose that she might obtain,
In borrow'd robes fictitiously she dress'd;
Like him that goeth yonder; who, to gain
The choicest of the herd, dared represent
Buossi Donati, and upon him took
To sign and seal a forged testament."
Then, when this furious pair had onward pass'd,
Whom I had scann'd with such an eager look,
Tow'rds other tortured souls mine eyes I cast.
One I beheld who like a lute was made,
Had but the groin been amputated there
Where in the human form the fork's display'd.
The dropsy, which an ill-assorted grace
Gives to the body, making it appear
Most strangely disproportion'd to the face,
Compell'd him both his lips to open wide;
E'en as a hectic lifts one lip on high,
And lets the other, parch'd with thirst, subside.
" O ye! who free from punishment are here
In this unhappy world! (I know not why,")
He said to us, " behold, and lend your ear

To master Adam's miserable strain.
  What I desired on earth, I compass'd—all;
  One drop of water now I crave in vain.
The rivulets, which from the verdant hills
  Of Casentino into Arno fall,
  Cooling the channels with their limpid rills,
Seem always in my sight; nor idly so,—
  For their fond image more dries up my skin
  Than all the torture which my features show.
Stern justice, racking me with inward throes—
  E'en from the very region of my sin
  Occasion takes to aggravate my woes:
There is Romena, where of old I learnt
  To forge the coin that bore the Baptist's head;
  For which offence my earthly frame was burnt:
But could the sight of Guido bless my soul,
  Or Alexander, or their brother sad,
  I'd change it not for Branda's fountain cool.
One here below I might already view,
  If the mad souls around us speak the truth;—
  But fetter'd thus, alas! what can I do?
Were I so light that in a century
  I could advance a single inch forsooth,
  Already on my journey should I be

In search of him among this people vile,
Although eleven miles the vale is spread,
Nor less in width extends than half a mile.
To them I owe this curs'd society;
By them to stamp the florins was I led,
Mix'd with three carats of alloy." Thus he.—
And I rejoin'd: " Who are that pair
That on the right lie smoking, like a hand
In water steep'd, and then exposed in air?"
" Since first I found them here," was his reply,
" When down I fell to this ill-fated strand,
They ne'er have turn'd, nor will, I think, for aye.
One—the false dame who Joseph dared accuse;
Sinon the other—that false Greek from Troy:
Their burning fever doth this steam diffuse."
And one of them, who, at this title rude,
Experienced haply somewhat of annoy,
Struck with his fist the other's stomach crude,
That sounded like a drum:—with arm uprear'd,
Adam return'd the blow upon his face,
Which no less hard than his own paunch appear'd;—
Exclaiming: " Ha! although I am debarr'd
By these unwieldy limbs from change of place,
Still I've an arm for my defence prepared."

" Not quite so ready was it," he rejoin'd,
" When to the flames they bore you tightly bound,
Though still more ready was it when you coin'd."
He with the dropsy: " Now your speech is true;—
But not so true a witness were you found,
When of the truth at Troy they question'd you."
" If I spake false, you falsely coin'd," replied
Sinon,—" and here for but one fault am I,
While you for more than any fiend beside."
" Remember, perjured one, the horse at Troy,"
Answer'd the spirit of the stomach high;
" That thou art guilty knows each puny boy."
" Proof of thy guilt thy gaping mouth supplies,"
The Greek retorted, " and that ample fount
Rear'd by thy tumid paunch before thine eyes."
The coiner then: " So runs your tongue—the same
To utter evil as 'twas ever wont;
And if I thirst, and moisture swells my frame,
You are burnt up, and pains torment your head;
And to lap up Narcissus' looking glass
No pressing invitation would you need."
Listening I stood intent, with all my mind,
When cried the master: " Now beware;—alas!
To quarrel with thee am I much inclined."

When I perceived the wrath in which he spake,
I turn'd me to him with such sense of shame
As will not even now my thoughts forsake.
And like to one who dreams of miseries,
Which, as he dreams, he hopes may prove a dream,
And longs for that which all the time is his;—
So I, to whom my tongue its aid refused,
E'en by the wish to palliate what I'd done
Had unawares my own offence excused.
My master said: "Less shame would wash away
A far more heinous fault than thine, my son;
Then let no sorrow on thy spirits prey.
Consider I am always at thy side,
If e'er again thou happen to be placed
Where, in like strife, each other, men deride:—
The wish to hear them shows a vulgar taste.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXXI.

ARGUMENT.

APPROACHING the ninth circle, divided into four rounds, Dante fancies he sees it surrounded by lofty towers. Virgil undeceives him, and informs him they are giants. Nimrod, Ephialtes, Briareus. Antæus takes both the poets in his arms, and places them at the bottom of the circle.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXXI.

The very tongue, whose sharp rebuke had dyed
My either cheek with shame of crimson hue,
Itself, unask'd, a remedy supplied.
Thus have I heard Achilles' lance possest
A charmed power, as erst his father's too,
Inflicting wounds it presently redrest.
Turning our backs upon the vale of woe,
Then mounted we the rock which circles it;
Nor, as we pass'd, did aught of speech bestow.
Here less than day, and less than night we found,
So that not far could I extend my sight;
But through the gloom I heard a horn resound,—

Such as would make the loudest thunder hoarse:
Wherefore I turn'd mine eyes to whence it came,
Pursuing eagerly its awful course.
Not—that destructive day of carnage past,
When Charlemagne had lost his sacred aim—
Sounded Orlando such a fearful blast.
Then towards the place I somewhat raised my head;
And many a lofty tower I seem'd to ken:
"O master, what new land is this?" I said.
"Athwart the dusky air so long the way,
Thine eye," quoth he, "a sight can scarce obtain;
And hence imagination leads astray.
But thou wilt see, if there thou should arrive,
How much deceived by distance is the sense;
Wherefore to gain a nearer prospect strive."
Then tenderly he took me by the hand,
And said: "Ere we pursue our journey hence—
That this delusion thou may'st understand,
Know—that not towers are these, but giants, who,
Circling the bank, stand one and all immersed
Down from the middle in the pit below.
As when a mist dispersing—melts away,
The eye by slow degrees takes in what erst
Conceal'd within the lurid vapour lay;

Thus, piercing through the gross and murky air,
While slowly I approach'd the brink profound,
My error fled, but soon was chang'd to fear:—
For, as above its wide-extended space,
With lofty towers is Montereggion crown'd,
So is the shore, which doth this gulf embrace,
By dreadful giants turretted throughout;
Whose persons, half exposed, the fiery dart
Of thundering Jove still menaces with rout.
Of one already I the face descried,
The shoulders, breast, and of the paunch great part;
The arms too hanging down on either side.
Nature forsooth her counsels wisely plann'd,
What time she ceased these monsters to create,
Depriving Mars of such abettors;—and
If she repent not that the earth yet teems
With elephants and whales—still more discreet
In this to a discerning judge she seems:
For when the noble faculty of mind
To power is added, and to ill design,
No remedy can man against them find.
His face as long, and e'en as wide methought,
As at St. Peter's is the brazen pine;
And in proportion all his limbs were wrought.

And thus the bank, which, from the waist below,
Girdled him round, so much above left seen,
That vainly would three Friezlanders bestow
Their pains to reach his hair: such was his size,
That thirty measured palms at least, I ween,
Appear'd below where man his mantle ties.
Forth issued from his savage lips a shout:
" Raphegi mai amech izabi almi;"
For more harmonious sounds became him not.
To him my guide; " Insensate spirit—rest;
Keep to thy horn; and let its sounds supply
A vent to angry passions in thy breast:
Look on thy neck; and thou the band wilt find
Which holds it fast, O thou distracted one!
Lo! round thy mighty breast it is entwined."
To me he said: " Himself he hath accused;—
Nimrod is this, through whose proud thoughts alone
One language is on earth no longer used.
There let him rest, nor speak to him in vain;
For e'en as he none else can understand,
So others from his tongue no sense can gain."
Then bearing to the left we onward pass'd,
And found another still more fierce and grand,
About the distance that a sling could cast.

Who had the strength this giant huge to bind,
I know not;—but enchain'd upon his breast
The left arm lay;—the right arm was behind,
Girt with the chain, by which his breast was bound
Down from the neck: five times above his waist
Apparent ran the circling fetters round.
" In conflict with dread Jove, the sovereign lord,
Wish'd this presumptuous one to try his might,"
Exclaim'd my guide, " and this is his reward:—
His name Phialtes:—when the giants made
The gods to tremble, great was he in fight:
No more he moves the arms which then he sway'd."
" Much could I wish, O master," I exclaim,
" If it be possible, that I might see
Briareus' huge immeasurable frame."
He answer'd me: " Thou shalt behold full soon
Antæus, who is loose, and speaketh;—he
To guilt's profoundest depth shall bear us down.
Far distant is the one thou would'st survey,
With fetters bound;—like him thou see'st withal,
Though more ferocity his looks betray.
Never was earthquake so tremendous, when
It shakes some castle, tottering to its fall,
As was the struggle of Phialtes:—then

Came o'er my soul a dread of death, that ne'er
Till now I felt; and had I not survey'd
The chains that bound him, life had fail'd through fear.
We then proceeded on; and presently
We reach'd Antæus, who, besides his head,
Five ells at least tower'd o'er the cavity.
"O thou, who in that memorable field
Where valiant Scipio won a deathless name,
And Hannibal's proud host was forced to yield,
A thousand lions bore—thy prize—away;
And by whose aid, if we may trust to fame,
Hadst thou thy brethren join'd in the affray,
The sons of Earth had gain'd the victory,—
Bear us below, where icy bonds congeal
Cocytus' stream; nor our request deny,
Lest we to Tityon or to Tiseus go:
See here is one, with power to do thy will;
Wherefore disdain us not, but bend thee low:
On earth he still may renovate thy fame;
For yet he lives, and life hath yet in store,
Unless his spirit grace should sooner claim."
My master thus:—him seized without delay
The giant in his mighty hands, of yore
By Hercules experienced with dismay.

When Virgil felt his grasp, to me he said:
"So place thyself that I may take thee:"—then
One group both of himself and me he made.
As Carisenda, view'd by one below,
What time a cloud flies over it—seems to lean
In opposite direction;—even so
To me appear'd Antæus, as I stood
In wonder;—and so fearful was his guise,
I gladly would have gone some other road.
But in the abyss he lightly set us down,
Where Lucifer with traitor Judas lies:
Nor long remain'd inclining thus;—but soon
Rose, as the mast from deck is seen to rise.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXXII.

ARGUMENT.

THE ninth circle is divided into four rounds, of which two, viz. Caina and Antenora, are here mentioned. In a lake of ice, formed by the stagnant waters of Cocytus, are fixed the sinners, consisting, first, of traitors to their own families, and, secondly, traitors to their country.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXXII.

Had I a rhyme so rugged, rough, and hoarse, 1
As would become the sorrowful abyss,
O'er which the rocky circles wind their course,—
Then with a more appropriate form I might
Endow my vast conceptions;—wanting this,
Not without fear I bring myself to write.
For no light enterprize it is, I deem, 7
To tell the very lowest depth of all;
Nor should a childish tongue attempt the theme.
But may the heavenly Nine their aid afford,
By whom Amphion rear'd Thebes' lofty wall;
So that my words may with the fact accord.

Ill-fated dwellers in this sink forlorn!
  Surpassing all in misery and woe,—
  Far better had ye sheep or goats been born!
Down in the gulf of darkness, black as night,
  We stood, far sunk the giant's feet below;—
  Upon the lofty wall still fix'd my sight:
When came a voice: "Beware how you proceed,
  And measure well your steps, lest, as you pass,
  On our unhappy brethren's heads you tread."
Wherefore I turn'd me round, and saw before
  And underneath my feet a lake like glass;
  For not of ice the semblance that it bore.
Not Austrian Danube, in the winter driven
  By bitter winds, so thick a crust might wear;
  Nor Tanais chill'd beneath the inclement heaven:
For Tambernicchi falling from his height,
  Or Pietrepana hurl'd in ruin there,
  Had not e'en crack'd the margins with their weight.
As stands a frog—his mouth above the stream—
  Croaking—in autumn, when the village maid
  (Her labour o'er) doth oft of gleaning dream;
So, wedged in ice, the wretched souls complain;—
  A livid hue their haggard looks betray'd;
  Like storks, their teeth sent forth a chattering strain.

Downcast their looks;—how pinching was the cold
Their mouths bore ample proof; and from each eye
Might the dire anguish of their hearts be told.
When I had somewhat turn'd my sight around,
Two shades beneath so closely link'd I spy,
Their very locks together fast were bound.
"O ye," I said, "united breast to breast,
Tell who ye are:"—whereat the neck they bent;
And when to me their looks were upward cast,—
Their eyes, erst moisten'd with the liquid tear,
O'erflow'd the lids: then did the frost cement
The falling drops, and so detain them there.
Ne'er plank to plank could iron cramp unite
So closely;—like two mountain goats they plied,
And smote each other from excess of spite.
And one, who from intensity of cold
Had lost both ears, his face still stooping, cried:
"Say, wherefore us so earnestly behold?
Who are these two, would'st thou discover,—know,
Their father Albert own'd that valley sweet,
Through which Bisenzio's murmuring waters flow.
One mother bore them both;—thou may'st explore
Caina through, nor with a spirit meet,
Who fix'd in icy bonds, deserves them more.

Not he, whose breast together with his shade
Was at one blow transfix'd by Arthur's might;
Nor yet Foccaccia; nor e'en he, whose head
Casts such a shadow that I cannot see,—
And Sassol Mascheroni was he hight:
If thou art Tuscan, he is known to thee.
And that thou may'st not urge me more to say,
Know that Camicion Pazzi is my name;
And Carlin I expect, to wipe my guilt away."
I saw a thousand faces blue with cold,
Whence comes a deadly shiver o'er my frame,
Whene'er such icy shallows I behold.
Whilst numb'd and trembling I my footsteps bend,
Advancing to the centre, where, compress'd,
All heavy bodies naturally tend;—
Whether impell'd by fate, desire, or luck,
I know not,—but, as 'mid their heads I pass'd,
The face of one my foot severely struck.
Weeping he cried: "Wherefore thus crush my head?
Unless you mean the vengeance to improve
Of Montaperti—why so fiercely tread?"
Then I: "O master, let me here remain,
That by his means my doubts I may remove;
No longer then will I thy steps detain."

The poet stopp'd: whereat, to him I cried
Who still was cursing loudly:—"What, I pray,
Art thou, that others dost so fiercely chide?"
"Who then art thou," retorted he again,
"Through Antenora causing such dismay?—
Wert thou alive I would not this sustain."
"Alive I am;—and if thou wish for fame,"
I answer'd, "it perhaps may give thee joy
Mid other worthies to insert thy name."
"Quite the reverse what I desire," said he;
"So prithee hence, nor cause me more annoy;
Ill knowest thou the art of flattery."
Then did I seize him by the scalp, and said:
"Now will I force thee to declare thy name,
Or not a hair I'll leave upon thy head."
And he to me: "Then strip me of my hair:"—
I ne'er will tell, or show thee who I am,
Although a thousand times my scalp thou tear."
Already in my hand his locks were bound,
And more than one of them were gather'd;—he
Barking awhile—his eyes upon the ground;
When cried another: "Bocca, art thou sane?
Sound not thy chattering teeth sufficiently,
But thou must bark? what devil gives thee pain?"

"Traitor accurst, be silent!"—I exclaim:
For know—that back to earth of thee I'll bear
A true account, to thy eternal shame."
"Begone!"—he cried, "and tell what tales you please;
But hence if you escape, his name declare,
Whose tongue but lately ran with so much ease:
Here he bewails the bribe of Frenchmen's gold.
'Him of Duera,' may'st thou say, 'I view'd,
Where sinners stand enshrined in icy cold.'
What others sojourn there, if ask'd to tell—
Him of Beccaria, at thy side, include;
On whom the avenging steel of Florence fell.
Gianni Soldanier, I believe, beyond,—
With Ganellon, and Tebaldello, who
Betray'd Faenza sunk in sleep profound."
Him had we left; when in a single hole
I witness'd two, together frozen so,
The head of one appear'd the other's cowl.
And like a famish'd man devouring bread,—
Thus, where the brain doth with the spine unite,
The upper one upon the under fed.
Not otherwise fierce Tydeus in disdain
Gnaw'd Menalippus' scalp, than, through despite,
This drove his teeth into the skull and brain.

"O thou," I said, "who makest known thy hate
By such foul sign of bestiality,—
The reason why, on this condition, state;
That if with justice thou such malice bear,—
Learning thy name, and his offences—I
To earth return'd, may still thy wrongs declare;
Unless the tongue with which I speak be dry."

INFERNO.

CANTO XXXIII.

ARGUMENT.

COUNT Ugolino relates the cruel manner in which he and his sons were starved to death in the tower at Pisa, by the command of the Archbishop Ruggieri. In the third round of this ninth circle, called Ptolemea, are punished those who have betrayed their friends. Friar Alberigo, &c.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXXIII.

His mouth uplifted from the fell repast
That vengeful sinner,—wiping it upon
The hair of the foul mangled head:—at last
He thus began: "Thou bid'st me to renew
Unutterable grief; whose thought alone
Weighs down my heart, ere I the tale pursue.
But if my words may, haply, prove the seed,
Whence infamy shall spring to him I rend,
Then will I speak, though tears my voice impede.
I know not who thou art, nor can divine
How to this nether world thou didst descend;
But from thy speech I judge thee Florentine.

Know then—Count Ugolino was my name;
  Archbishop Ruggier this:—now will I say
  Why such close fellowship with him I claim.
How by his treacherous designs it fell,
  That, trusting in him, I was borne away
  And put to death—there is no need to tell.
But that which ne'er could have been heard by thee—
  How cruel was my death—will I relate;
  Then wilt thou know if he hath injured me.
Through a small loophole in that dismal cell,
  (The "cell of hunger" call'd, from my sad fate,
  And where some other yet is doom'd to dwell)
Full many moons had shed their broken light,
  When o'er me came that evil omen'd sleep,
  Which all unveil'd the future to my sight.
This traitor seem'd, as huntsman, to pursue
  The He-wolf and his young ones to that steep
  Which shuts out Lucca from the Pisan's view.
Lean hounds, well train'd, and eager for the chase—
  The Gualands, with the Sismonds and Lanfrancks,
  Before him he let slip:—in little space
The father and his sons, as though forespent,
  Lagg'd in the course; and then their heaving flanks
  Methought by those infuriate tusks were rent.

When I awoke, ere morn its rays had shed,
I heard my sons, who with me were confined,
Sob in their slumbers, and cry out for bread.
Full cruel art thou, if thou canst conceive,
Without a tear, what then came o'er my mind!
And if thou grieve not, what can make thee grieve?
They were awake; and now the hour drew near,
Which had been wont to bring their scant repast,
And each was pondering o'er his dream of fear,—
When from within the dreadful tower I heard
The entrance underneath with nails made fast:—
I gazed upon my boys—nor spake a word.
I wept not, for my heart was turn'd to stone;—
My children wept;—and little Anselm cried:
'What ails thee Father?—strange thy looks are grown.'
Yet still I wept not—still made no reply
Throughout that day, and all the night beside;
Until another sun lit up the sky.
But, when a faint and broken ray was thrown
Within that dismal dungeon, and I view'd
In their four looks the image of my own,—
Then both my hands through anguish did I bite;
And they, supposing that from want of food
I did so—sudden rais'd themselves upright,

And said: 'O Father, less will be our pain,
If thou wilt feed on us:—thou didst bestow
This wretched flesh;—'tis thine to take again.'
Then was I calm, lest they the more should grieve.
Two days all silent we remain'd!—O thou
Hard earth, why didst thou not beneath us cleave?
Four days our agonies had been delay'd,
When Gaddo at my feet his body threw,
Exclaiming: 'Father! why not give me aid?'
He died;—and, as distinct as here I stand,
I saw the three fall one by one, before
The sixth day closed;—then, groping with my hand,
I felt each wretched corse, for sight had fail'd;
Two days I call'd on those who were no more;
Then hunger—stronger e'en than grief—prevail'd."
This said—aside his vengeful eyes were thrown,
And with his teeth the skull again he tore,—
Fierce as a dog to gnaw the very bone.
O Pisa! the disgrace of that fair land
Where "*Si*" is spoken;—since thy neighbours round
Take vengeance on thee with a tardy hand—
To dam the mouth of Arno's rolling tide
Let Capraia and Gorgona raise a mound,
That all may perish in the waters wide!

Thou modern Thebes! what? though, as fame hath said,
Count Ugolino did thy forts betray,—
His sons deserved not punishment so dread.
Brigata, Uguccion, and that sad pair
My song hath told of—innocent were they;
Their tender years should have inclined to spare.
We then arrived, for we were journeying on,
Where bonds of ice another tribe compress,
Stretch'd on their back, unable to look down.
Their very tears forbid their tears to flow;
And grief, unable through their eyes to pass,
Turns itself inward to increase their woe.
Forming a cluster, the first tears unite,
Which thus, like crystal vizors to behold,
Fill all the cup that holds the ball of sight.
And though, like one to all impressions dead,
And callous grown, I was benumbed with cold,
So that all feeling from my face had fled,—
Still as it seem'd, some little wind prevail'd;
Whereat I said: "O master, what is this?—
Methought, at such a depth all vapour fail'd."
"Ere long," he answer'd, "shall we hence repair,
To where thine eyes shall tell thee what it is,
Discerning whence proceeds this gust of air."

Then one, in frozen crust confined,
  Exclaim'd: "O souls, so cruel though ye be,
  Since to the lowest place ye are assign'd,—
Raise from my face the rigid veil I feel,
  That I may vent in tears my agony
  A moment's space, ere they again congeal."
Then I: "If thou would'st bid my heart relent,
  Say who thou art—and if I aid thee not,
  Down to the lowest ice may I be sent."
"Friar Alberigo, be it known," he said,
  "Am I, who fruit from evil garden brought;
  And here my fig is with a date repaid."
"What? art thou number'd with the dead?" I cried.
  "How on the earth above my body fares—
  That knowledge I possess not," he replied;
"For many souls here come, by vengeance driven,
  (Such privilege this Ptolomea shares)
  Ere Atropos the fatal stroke hath given:
And that more willingly thou may'st erase
  The crystal tears, upon my face congeal'd,
  Know—every soul, that, like to mine, betrays—
The body straight is seized on by a fiend,
  To whose dominion it doth wholly yield,
  Till its allotted time on earth shall end;

The soul descends to such a cistern here:
And still perhaps on earth the body's seen
Of the sad shade which winters in my rear.
If lately thou cam'st hither, thou must know,
He is Ser Branca D'Oria whom I mean;—
For many years has he been here below."
Then I: "Thou fain would'st dupe me, as I guess,
For Branca D'Oria surely is not dead,
But eats, and drinks, and sleeps, and dons his dress."
"Ere to the trench above of Malebranche,
Where alway boils the adhesive pitch," he said,
"Had yet arrived the hapless Michael Zanche,
This D'Oria's form the devil did assume;
His kinsman too—leagued in the treacherous plot—
Shared also in his miserable doom.
But come—extend thy hand this way to me;
Open my eyes;"—his eyes I open'd not;
Rudeness to him were fairest courtesy.
Ah Genoese, of honesty devoid!
So base your city, so replete with guile,
Why are ye not at one fell swoop destroy'd?
For with Romagna's spirit most accurst
A countryman of your's I found—so vile,
That in Cocytus is his soul immersed,
Though bodily he lives on earth the while.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXXIV.

ARGUMENT.

DESCRIPTION of Lucifer, surrounded with ice in the very centre of the earth, or lowest depth of hell. Judas Iscariot. Brutus. Cassius; and others who have been guilty of ingratitude, and betrayed their benefactors. Passing the centre, the poets ascend to the other hemisphere, and again obtain a sight of the stars.

INFERNO.

CANTO XXXIV.

"Lo, come the banners of the king of hell!"
My master said: "then forward stretch thine eye,
And, if thou canst—behold the monarch fell."
Like to a windmill, in the distance seen
Whirling about, when night enwraps the sky,
Or dense and murky vapours intervene;—
Such seem'd the structure that I gazed upon.
Whereat, to shun the cutting blast, I drew
Behind my guide, for shelter else was none.
Now came we—and I pen the verse with fear—
Where wholly cover'd were the shades;—seen through
The ice, e'en like to straws in crystal clear.

Some prostrate—others upright I observ'd,
One on his head, and one upon his feet;
Another's figure like a bow was curved.
When we had made such progress on our way,
That to my kind instructor it seem'd meet,
The creature, once so beauteous, to display;—
Standing aside, he bade me halt,—and cried:
"Now Dis behold!—be thine, in this dread spot
A heart of firmest courage to provide."
How hoarse and icy cold I then became—
Demand not, reader, since I write it not;
For all description would be weak and tame.
I died not;—nor was life within me left;
Imagine then, if fancy thou possess,
What I became, of either state bereft.
Above the ice uprear'd his bust on high
The monarch of that region of distress;
And nearer to a giant's height am I,
Than to his arms are giants:—now compute,
How vast in magnitude the whole must be,
Which to a portion so immense could suit.
If he were beauteous once, as hideous now,—
Yet in his pride transgress'd his Sire's decree,
Well may he be the source of every woe.

O what a prodigy he seem'd, to view!
For on his head three faces were uprear'd;
The one in front of a vermillion hue:
The other two, above each shoulder blade,
United closely to the first appear'd;
And at the crest all three a junction made.
Somewhat 'twixt white and yellow was the right;
The left, to look at, was like those who dwell
Where Nile descends from Ethiopia's height.
Two mighty wings extended under each,
Which to a bird so monstrous suited well:
Nor e'er beheld I sails such distance reach.
Plumes had they none; but in their texture they
Were like a bat's; which, flexible and thin,
Produced three winds by their incessant play,
And froze Cocytus' lowest depths profound.
The six eyes wept; and o'er his triple chin
The tears and bloody foam pour'd fast around.
At every mouth, e'en like a grinding mill,
He crush'd a writhing sinner in his jaws;
Thus three at once were doom'd his wrath to feel.
To him in front, this crushing was but play,
Compared with what he suffer'd from the claws,
Which from his back oft tore the skin away.

" That one above, condemn'd to pangs more dread,
Is Judas 'Scariot," said my guide:—" without,
His feet he plies; within, sinks down his head.
Of the other two, whose heads are plunged below,
Brutus the one, who hangs from the black throat;
See how he writhes, yet speaks not in his woe!—
Cassius the other, with such strength endued.
But night returns; and from the abyss of hell
We must depart—for all hath now been view'd."
My master's neck I clasp'd, for so he bade;
Then, judging both his time and distance well,
He, when the monster's wings were fairly spread,
Attach'd him closely to the shaggy side,
And made from lock to lock his downward way,
Between the wall of ice, and rugged hide:
When we had reach'd a station, where the thigh
Doth on the swelling of the haunches play,
My guide with much fatigue and urgency
Moved round his head where late his feet had been,
And, like to one who mounts, clung to the hair:—
I thought to hell we were returning;—then
Panting—e'en as a man forespent with toil—
He said to me: " Take heed; for by such stair
Must we escape from this accursed soil."

Forth issuing through an opening in the rock,
He placed me on the brink, and cautiously
Guiding his steps, a seat beside me took.
I raised my eyes;—nor change did I expect
In Lucifer, since last beheld by me;
When lo! his feet were seen in air erect!
And how I then with trouble was opprest,
Let grosser minds imagine—not endued
With sense to mark the point that I had past.
Now spoke the master: "Rise, and let us on,—
Long is the way, and rugged is the road;
The sun is riding near his highest noon."
No royal path was that on which we were,
But wrought by nature, savage, rough, and rude;
Nor was there aught but troublous twilight there.
"Ere from the dark abyss we take our way,
Master," I said, when on my feet I stood,
"Some words bestow, lest I in error stray.
Where is the ice?—and wherefore is his head
Fix'd upside down? and tell the reason why
From west to east the sun so soon hath sped."
Then he: "Thou still imaginest we are
On the other side the central point, where I
Clung to the worm that pierceth earth:—so far

Indeed, as I continued to descend,
That side we kept; but when I turn'd, then we
Had pass'd the point to which all bodies tend.
Now art thou come the hemisphere beneath
Opposed to that which forms earth's canopy;
Under whose highest cope was led to death
The man who knew no sin. A little sphere
Is that thou standest on: its other face
Is on Giudecca's side. Morn rises here
When it is evening there: and he who erst
Made of his hide a stair unto this place,
Remains the same as when we saw him first.
Upon this spot, from heaven the traitor fell;
And then the land, which once was dry, through fear
Of him took refuge under ocean's veil,
And reach'd our hemisphere:—so, haply fled
The earth which now is elevated there,
And sinking here, exalted there its head.
As far from Beelzebub as the profound
Abyss is deep, a place there is below,
Not known by sight, but only by the sound
Caused by a streamlet, here descending down
Along a bed, worn by its constant flow,—
Of easy slope, in gentle windings thrown."

My guide and I this secret pathway chose
To reconduct us to the world of light;
And up we journied, heedless of repose,
He mounting first, while I his steps pursued,—
Till, through an orifice, heav'n's splendours bright
Burst on mine eyes:—emerging thence, we view'd
The stars once more unfolded to our sight.

A 5

NOTES.

NOTES.

CANTO I.

1. *In the midway of this our life below.*

Dante was born in 1265, banished in 1302, and died at Ravenna in 1321. His poem he supposes to commence in 1300, though written some years after. He was then 35—half the term of human life according to the Scriptures.

2. *I found myself within a gloomy wood.*

i. e. The vicious generation in which Dante lived. See Introduction, p. vii. "The allegory of the wood, which serves as an introduction to the poem, was adapted to the condition of Italy, and to the reigning potentates individually, after they had conspired to prostitute the religion of Christ." . . . . . "Dante saw the miserable condition of Italy springing from the dogmas of the priests, which were adulterated through the lust of gold and dominion." . . . "The principal, if not the only object of the poem, was to reform all the discipline, and part of the rites and dogmas of the Papal Church."—*Ugo Foscolo. Discorso*, pp. 327, 77, 105.

"The end Dante had in view was that of enlightening the people, and of exposing the cunning and impostures of those who lived upon their credulity, and made an infamous traffic of absurdities."—*Panizzi. Romantic Poetry of the Italians*, p. 215.

The wood is situated in a valley: hence "the wood" and "the valley" are synonymous.

3. *No traces left the path direct to show.*

The path of truth, (verse 12) wholly lost and obliterated in an age of ignorance and superstition. The path direct, or the right way, is frequently mentioned in the Scriptures. Psalm xxvii. 13. cvii. 4. cxix. 3. and several allusions in this Canto, may be explained by reference to that verse of St. John:

" I am the way, the truth, and the life."—ch. xiv. 9.

" Dante lost his way, not through his own fault, but because the path of rectitude was obliterated."—*Rossetti.*

In his Convito, Dante says: " L' adolescenza ch' entra nella selva erronea di qu sta vita non saprebbe tener il buon cammino;"—and though exalted far above the rest of his countrymen, Dante applies this to himself, as educated from his early youth in erroneous doctrines.—(c. xv. 49.) *Purg.* xvi. 66. xxxi. 44.

8. *But to describe the good which there I found.*

Namely, the fruit derived from meditation upon that miserable state, full of pain and remorse, by means of which we arrive at the contemplation of God—the object proposed by the poet.—*Magalotti.*

13. *But soon as I had reached a mountain's base.*

The mountain of virtue.—The sun, the symbol of reason.

22. *And like to one all breathless.—*

" E come quei che con lena affannata."

" This verse one cannot utter without that difficult respiration which the poet wishes to express."—*Biagioli.*

" Dante condenses all his thoughts and feelings in the facts he relates, and expresses himself invariably by images: even his largest groups are composed of a very few strokes of the pencil,

and in none does he ever stop to fill up the design with minute or successive touches, but hastily passes on through the boundless variety of his subject, without once pausing to heighten the effect, or even to allow its full developement to the emotion he has excited. A single word flung in, apparently without design, often gives its whole light and character to the picture."—*Ugo Foscolo, Edinb. Review*, vol. xxx.

27. *Which never spared the life of mortal wight.*

In scriptural language sin is said to bring death upon the soul of man, even during his existence upon earth; hence in the second canto Dante is himself said "to be combating with death;" and in the third he speaks of "wretches who never were alive."

30. *But lowest still the firmer foot remained.*

"Sì che il piè fermo sempre era il piu basso."

Various interpretations are given of this line. It seems to imply, as Rossetti observes, the tendency of man to be drawn back in the attempt to fulfil good resolutions.

32. *When lo, an agile panther barr'd my way.*

For an account of the three beasts see Introduction, p. ix. "Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, and a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities."—*Jeremiah*, v. 6., quoted by Mr. Cary. In the interpretation of the three beasts to mean Florence, France, and Rome, Dionisi, Marchetti, Ugo Foscolo and Rossetti all agree.

40. *When love divine first launch'd them in the skies.*

"It was the opinion of the ancients that the world was created in the spring."—

"Non alios primâ crescentis origine mundi
Illuxisse dies, aliumve habuisse tenorem
Crediderim: ver illud erat."—*Virg. Georg.* ii. 336.

49. *A She-wolf too.*

The She-wolf is the symbol of the avaricious Court of Rome.

Paolo Costa recognizes in the she-wolf, the shameless woman mentioned in the *Paradiso.* (See *Rev.* chap. xii. and xvii.)

" This interpretation," says Ugo Foscolo, " true and novel in our days, was rather concealed than unknown by the first commentators.". . . " The symbol of the She-wolf, understood to mean the meretricious venal Church, is carried on with consistency throughout the whole of the poem."—*Discorso*, p. 387, 389. Dante's belief on this subject is evident (see Canto xix. 106). In the Paradiso (c. ix. 132), he says, " The shepherd is turned into a wolf:" and again (xxvii. 55), calls the Popes " rapacious wolves in shepherds' garments."

See Canto vii. 46. xv. 106. xix. 1. xxvii. 70. and Notes.

60. *And drove me back to where the sun is mute.*

" Mi ripingeva la dove 'l Sol tace."

" The sun to me is dark and silent as the moon."—

Milton's Samson Agon.

" Non des requiem tibi, neque taceat pupilla oculi tui."—

Lament. Jeremiah, i. 18. *Vulgate.*

A similar metaphor occurs in the fifth canto, line 28.

" Throughout the place speaks not the light of heaven."

The sun is here the symbol of reason, whose voice was mute.

63. *One, who by long disuse of speech was hoarse.*

The poet Virgil.

73. *A bard I was.*

Poetry was the means chosen by Dante of revealing to mankind the secrets of the next world; and in this view there is no difficulty in understanding why a heathen should be selected as the guide of a Christian. Virgil was the greatest poet known

to Dante; he had made an imaginary journey down to hell before, and therefore, as he says, was acquainted with the way. By St. Austin and most of the fathers, he is supposed to have prophesied the coming of our Saviour (Eclog. iv. 7.); and by his works the poet Statius, in the Purgatorio, (xxii. 73,) says he was converted to Christianity. But Virgil is not thought worthy of conducting the Christian Poet into Paradise; and accordingly, Beatrice, or Heavenly Wisdom, takes his place for that purpose. The politics of the Roman poet, as Professor Rossetti justly observes, were highly congenial to those of Dante, who looked up to the Emperors as the successors of the Cæsars, and advocated their cause as the only means of uniting the numerous states of Italy under one government.

92. *Another path by thee must be pursued.*

See Introd. pp. xi. xv.

100. *She links herself to many an animal.*

With the Kings of the earth;—alluding to the impure alliances of the Popes with them. (See note, line 49.)

101. *And till the Greyhound come.*

Can Grande della Scala, Lord of Verona, a man of great valour and magnificence. Unfortunately he did not fulfil the prophecy here made, that he would rescue Italy from the tyranny of the Court of Rome, and extend his dominion from the city of Feltro in the Marca Trivigiana to Montefeltro in Romagna.

106. *His might Italia's lowly plains shall save.*

" —Humilemque videmus Italiam."—*Æn.* iii. 522.

110. *Whence Envy drew her first.*

" Through envy of the devil came death into the world."—*Wisdom*, ii. 24.

117. *Imploring death to strike the second blow.*

An allusion to the Apocalypse—" And in those days men shall seek death, and shall not find it, and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them," (*Rev.* ix. 6); *i. e.* the death of the soul as well as that of the body.—(*Lombardi*).

118. *Others—in fire contented to remain.*

The spirits in Purgatory.

122. *A soul more worthy shall conduct thy flight.*

Beatrice, or Heavenly Wisdom.—See Introd. p. xv. and c. ii. 70.

125. *Grants not that I, a rebel in his sight.*

Virgil says, in the Purgatorio, " that he had lost heaven for no other offence than the want of faith," (vii. 7.); and therefore, as Lombardi concludes, " the being rebellious to the divine law," is the same as being " an alien from the true faith." (See *Par.* xix. 103.)

127. *Lord of the universe, his seat is there.*

" The Lord hath prepared his seat in heaven, and his kingdom ruleth over all."—*Psalm* ciii. 19.

134. *The gateway of St. Peter may be view'd.*

The gate of Paradise.

> " And now St. Peter at heaven's wicket seems
> To wait them with his keys."—*Par. Lost,* b. iii.

Quoted by Mr. Cary.

CANTO II.

1. *The day was closing.*

" It was the time when rest, soft sliding down
From heaven's height into men's heavy eyes,
In the forgetfulness of sleep doth drown
The careful thoughts of mortal miseries."

Spencer, Visions of Bellay.

Compare Virgil, Æn. iii. 147, ix. 224.

3. ———————— *I alone prepare*
To struggle against pity.

Dante's whole poem may be called a struggle against pity—so kind-hearted and compassionate was he by nature, (see Cantos v. 117. vii. 36. xiii. 84. xvi. 52.) yet so convinced of the impiety of commiserating those whom God in his justice hath condemned—(see Canto xx. 30.) " The soul of the poet was fraught even to redundance with ' gentle feelings,' and poured them out, on every occasion, with a warmth and delicacy perhaps unequalled in any other writer." — *Ugo Foscolo, Edinb. Review*, vol. xxx.

26. *He gain'd the lore which led to victory.*

His victory over Turnus—leading to the establishment of the Roman empire, and ultimately of the papal throne.

28. *Next went " the chosen vessel."*

St. Paul, is called " the chosen vessel," (*Acts*, ix. 15,) and (whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell) " was caught up into Paradise, or the third heaven, and heard words

which it is not lawful for man to utter."—*2 Corinthians*, xii. 1, 2, 3, 4.) Dante states the object of St. Paul's ascension to have been,—to gain that knowledge, which on his return would enable him to comfort true believers. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 *Thessalonians*, iv. 18.) In the Paradiso, after his own ascension, Dante is thus addressed by St. James: "Our Governor wills, of his grace, that thou, ere thy death, shouldest be confronted with us [the Apostles] in the most secret council of his court, so that having seen the truth, thou mayest comfort thyself and others on earth in the hope of the truth," (*i. e.* in the hope of the triumph of the truth.) *Par.* xxv. 40.

32. *Æneas am not I, nor righteous Paul.*

See Introduction, p. xiv.

52. *Mid those in Limbo.*

The Catholic Limbo of the holy fathers is defined by Aquinas as a region of peace, exempt from all sense of pain, and enjoying the blessing of divine grace, but not of ineffable beatitude.—*Comment on Dante, Anonymous*, p. 87.

53. *When I was called by one so blest and fair.*

Beatrice. See Introduction, p. xv.

60. *And shall endure till ages cease to roll.*

"E durerà quanto l' { moto / mondo } lontana."

Much has been written on the subject of the two readings *moto* and *mondo*. Monti gives the preference to *mondo*—(see his *Propostia*); Ugo Foscolo to *moto*—(see his *Discorso*, p. 416). "It is probable," as the latter observes, "that they both came from the pen of Dante."

94. *In heaven there dwells a generous Maid.*

Divine Mercy.

97. *She called on Lucia in her prayer.*

Heavenly Grace. Lombardi supposes Lucia to have been St. Lucia the Martyr, and in this Mr. Cary concurs. See *Par.* xxvii. where she is placed among the souls of the blessed.

103. *O Beatrice, she said, true praise of God.*

" ——— ——— ——— Loda di Dio vera."

" There in his bosom Sapience doth sit,
The soveraine dearling of the Deity."

Spencer. Hymn to Heavenly Beauty.

104. *O why not succour him that loved thee so.*

" And she my love that was, my saint that is,
When she beholds from her celestial throne
(In which she joyeth in eternal bliss)
My bitter penance, will my case bemoan,
And pity me, that living, thus do die;
For heavenly spirits have compassion
On mortal men, and rue their misery."

Spencer's Daphnaida.

107. *The death he combats on the flood below.*

See note, line 28, Canto i.

" The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid."—*Psalm* xviii. 4.

115. *This said, her eyes all glistening in her tears.*

" Lacrymis oculos suffusa nitentes."—*Æn.* i. 228.

121. *Why linger then? what is it makes thee stay?*

The same words are used by Ananias in addressing St. Paul. "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know His will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of His mouth. For thou shalt be His witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now, why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the lord."—*Acts*, xxii. 14, 15, 16. But most striking is the resemblance of this whole passage (what has not been before remarked) to that glorious scene in the twenty-seventh canto of the Paradiso, where Dante receives his commission from the Apostles to be a witness of what he had seen and heard in the most secret court of heaven, after Beatrice has declared the iniquity and rapacity of those who had usurped the seat of St. Peter.

127. *As drooping flowerets closed by chilling night.*

See a similar passage, *Par.* xxii. 55.

132. *Like one restored to freedom, I began.*

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—*St. John*, viii. 32. "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."—*2 Cor.* iii. 17. See also *Romans*, viii. 15.

CANTO III.

5. *By Power Almighty was my fabric made,*
By highest Wisdom, and by primal Love.

The three persons of the Trinity.

18. *Of God—the mind's supremest good deprived.*

In the Convito, Dante says, " that in this life we possess but imperfectly the power of seeing God, the highest object of our understanding, and can only behold him in his works."—*Trattato*, iv.

22. *There sighs, and sorrows and heart-rending cries.*

" Quivi sospiri, pianti, ed alti guai."

In this passage Dante has united all the powers of language to represent the misery of the damned.

31. *Then (horror compassing my head around).*

" Ed io, ch' avea d' orror la testa cinta."

The reading of " orror" is adopted in preference to that of " error." This reading is supported by Boccaccio in his Comment on this line, and adopted by Panizzi, who quotes the line in his valuable edition of Bojardo.

37. *Here with those caitiff angels they abide.*

Dante, in a manner peculiarly his own, puts these wretches in the outskirts of hell, as unworthy alike of punishment and of mercy, and so despicable, that they cannot be received either

into paradise or hell. It is a lofty conception; and the passage one of the most highly finished in a poem which fully deserves the epithet which the judgment of five centuries has pronounced it.—*Panizzi, Romantic Poetry of the Italians*, p. 219.

"I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot."—*Rev.* iii. 15, 16.

42. *From them no glory could the damn'd obtain.*

"Ch' alcuna gloria i rei avrebber d' elli."

"Alcuna" is here taken in the sense of "niuna." Compare a similar passage, Canto xii. 9.

"Ch' alcuna via darebbe a cui su fosse."
"No passage it affordeth down the rock."

"Is it possible," says Monti, in opposition to those who take "alcuna" in the usual acceptation, "that Dante, after treating the neutrals with the utmost contempt, could declare that the damned would derive glory from their society? What glory, what honour could result from the company of those in the lowest possible state of degradation? And to whom would the honour be derived? To those who refuse to receive them?

"And Hell refuses to receive them too."

To refuse admission, because their admission would bring them honour, would be strange logic. Yet such is the reasoning put into Dante's mouth by the generality of Commentators, who would translate 'alcuna' to signify 'some.'"—*Monti.* See his "*Proposta*," vol. i. p. 2.

46. *These abject souls—no hope of death have they.*

"The damned perishing souls shall wish for death with a desire as impatient as their calamity. But this shall be denied them, because death were a deliverance, a mercy, and a pleasure, of which these miserable persons must despair for ever."—*Jeremy Taylor, Serm.* 19.

51. *Let us not speak of them, but look and pass.*

"Therefore eternal silence be their doom."—*Par. Lost*, vi. 385.

60. *Who, mean of soul, the grand refusal made.*

Celestine V. who from a hermit was suddenly made Pope. Cardinal Gaetano, afterwards Boniface VIII. persuaded him to abdicate; and having obtained the popedom himself, seized the innocent old man and immured him in a tower, where he died. Of Boniface, see Canto vi. 60; xix. 56; and xxvii. 105.

"The poet condenses into three lines, and often into one, the history of a prince's life."—*Ugo Foscolo.*

63. *By God and by his enemies despised.*

"He means that the inert are not only displeasing to God, but also to the enemies of God themselves—the devils—who would rejoice to find in them a greater degree of guilt."—*Lombardi.*

83. *An old man comes.*

Charon, the ferryman of Acheron.

93. *A lighter bark than this must carry thee.*

That by which the good spirits pass to Purgatory—a bark swift and light, under the guidance of an angel.—(See *Purg.* ii. 40.) *Biagioli.*

114. *Sees all its honours to the earth consigned.*

"Vede alla terra tutte le sue spoglie."

The reading of "vede" in preference to that of "rende" is adopted by Tasso as more energetic and picturesque.—Compare *Virgil. Georg.* ii. 80. *Æn.* vi. 369.

121. *All these, my son, exclaim'd the courteous guide.*

See questions asked, verse 72, and Virgil's reply.

125. *So that their fear is turned into desire.*

" Or let me die, to look on death no more."

Richard III. Act ii. sc. 4.

CANTO IV.

42. *Than to desire, when all our hopes are gone.*

As the hope of seeing God is represented in the Scriptures as productive of joy, so the absence of that hope is here said to be the cause of suffering.

51. *And he to whom my covert speech was known.*

"Lombardi well observes that Dante seems to have been restrained by reverence from uttering the name of Christ in this place of torment, and that, for the same cause probably, it does not occur once throughout the whole of this first part of the poem."—*Cary.*

53. *When lo! arrived a great and glorious Guest—*

Our Saviour.—"It is certain Christ's soul did exercise acts of life, of joy, of triumph, and did not sleep; but visited the souls of the fathers, trampled upon the pride of devils, and satisfied those longing souls which were prisoners of hope."—*Jeremy Taylor*, Serm. xxviii. 2d part.

See 1 *Peter*, iii. 19; iv. 6; also *Rev.* vi. 2.

68. *When I observed a flame so brightly burn.*

The flame, whose lustre overcomes the hemisphere of darkness, is a poetical conception, beautifully exemplifying the light which poetry casts amid an age of barbarism and ignorance.

80. *Let honour to the mighty bard be paid.*

Virgil is here intended, not Homer.

The shade of Virgil had quitted Limbo at the request of Beatrice. See Canto II. 53.

84. *Nor joy nor sorrow did their looks betray.*

Being in a place neither of happiness nor torment. (See note, c. ii. 52.)

86. *Who in his warlike arm uplifts a sword.*

The sword may be considered symbolical of the wars celebrated by Homer, or intended to represent him as the prince of poetry, in the same manner as St. Paul is painted with a sword as chief of the Apostles.

108. *A beauteous streamlet flowed around the place.*

The Commentators generally agree in considering this stream to represent Eloquence.

The seven walls are said to represent the seven theological and cardinal virtues.

123. *And mighty Cæsar armed with griffon's eyes.*

" And like a griffon looked he about."

Chaucer, Palamon and Arcite.

Birds of prey have piercing eyes—hence the comparison with those of a warrior.

132. *The master of philosophy.*

" Lo maestro di color che sanno."—*Aristotle.*

136. *Him who attributed the world to chance.*

Democritus.

139. *There saw I Zeno and Empedocles.*

Zeno, a Grecian philosopher. Empedocles, a philosopher of Sicily,—

> " He who, to be deem'd
> A God, leap'd fondly into Ætna's flames,
> Empedocles. *Par. Lost*, iii. 470.

CANTO V.

23. Thus it is willed, where will and power are one.

These same words were used by Virgil to calm Charon. Canto iii. 95.

28. Throughout the place speaks not the light of heaven.

See Canto i. 60, and notes.

43. Now up, now down, this way, and that again.

" Di quà, di là, di su, di giù li mena."

" A most beautiful and inimitable description, the force of which is almost more powerful than sight itself could produce." —*Magalotti.*

61. Then she, who slew herself for love, is seen.

Dido.

74. With those two shades together flitting there.

Francesca, daughter of Guido da Polenta, and Paolo, second son of Malatesta, Lord of Rimini.

" Guido engaged to give his daughter in marriage to Lanciotto, the eldest son of his enemy, the master of Rimini. Lanciotto, who was hideously deformed in countenance and figure, foresaw that if he presented himself in person, he should be rejected by the lady. He therefore resolved to marry her by proxy, and sent as his representative his youngest brother Paolo,

the handsomest and most accomplished man in all Italy. Francesca saw Paolo arrive, and imagined she beheld her future husband. That mistake was the commencement of her passion. The friends of Guido addressed him in strong remonstrances and mournful predictions of the dangers to which he exposed a daughter whose high spirit would never brook to be sacrificed with impunity. But Guido was no longer in a condition to make war; and the necessities of the politician overcame the feelings of the father."—*Boccacio.* The injured lovers could not stifle their mutual affection;—they were surprized and assassinated by Lanciotto.

82. *As doves, by strong affection urged, repair*
With firm expanded wings to their sweet nest,
Borne by the impulse of their will through air.

The motion through the air is merely caused by the will of the bird, without any mechanical exertion. That is the main beauty of the picture. Virgil has the same idea in part, but imperfectly brought out; when speaking of the dove, he says,

"Radit iter liquidum, celeres neque commovet alas."—*Æn.* v. 217.

Doves were considered by the ancients a symbol of the most constant fidelity.

90. *To visit us, that stained the earth with blood.*

i. e. Their own blood.

100. *Love, that in noble heart is quickly caught.*

"Amor ch' al cor gentil ratto s' apprende."

"For pitee renneth sone in gentil herte."—*Chaucer, Palamon and Arcite.*

i. e. "In the heart of a man of gentle or noble birth."—*Walter Scott. Notes to Dryden's Trans.*

"The words 'gentile' and 'gentilezza,' as used by the best

writers from Dante to the present day, denote rather nobleness of soul than amiableness of manners. Gentilezza is a propensity towards all that is beautiful and generous; and is the alliance of delicacy of sentiment with high courage. Ariosto says, 'the lion ha il cor gentile.' "—*Ugo Foscolo, Edinb. Rev.* No. 60.

103. *Love, that permits no loved one not to love.*

This is imitated at large by Pulci in his Morg. Mag., and has been thus elegantly translated by Lady Dacre:

" And because love not willingly excuses
One who is loved and loveth not again,
(For tyrannous were deemed the rule he uses,
Should they who sue for pity sue in vain)."

121. *And she to me: " There is no greater woe,*
Than to remember days of happiness
Amid affliction."

" Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old."—*Lament. of Jeremiah*, i. 7.

124. *But if, how love did first our hearts beguile.*

" Sed si tantus amor casus cognoscere nostros."—*Æn.* ii. 10.

127. *One day it chanced for pastime we were reading*
How Lancilot to love became a prey.

Lancilot was one of the Knights of the Round Table, and the lover of Genevra, celebrated in romance. Galeotto is written Galehaut, Galahalt, and Galahad. Galeotto was the person who acted between Genevra and Lancilot. Those who would wish

to see the old romance of Sir Lancilot, which is very rare, will find that part to which Dante refers extracted in the Landscape Annual (1831, Art. *Rimini*). Very curious and interesting information, relative to Francesca and the Malatesta family, is there given from the pen of Panizzi.

135. *Then he, who from my side will ne'er remove.*

" The poet lets us perceive how divine justice itself was merciful towards these unfortunate lovers, since even amid the torments of hell he allowed them to love each other, and to continue for ever inseparable."—*Ugo Foscolo, Dis.* p. 311.

" Francesca imputes the passion her brother-in-law conceived for her not to depravity, but nobleness of heart in him, and to her own loveliness. . . . . She confesses that she loved because she was beloved. That charm had deluded her;—and she declares, with transport, that joy had not abandoned her even in hell. It is thus that Dante unites perspicuity with conciseness, and the most naked simplicity with the profoundest observation of the heart. Her guilty passion survives its punishment by heaven, but without a shade of impiety. How striking is the contrast of her extreme happiness in the midst of torments that can never cease. . . . . She goes on to relieve her brother-in-law from all imputation of having seduced her. Alone, and unconscious of their danger, they read a love-story together. They gazed upon each other, pale with emotion, but the secret of their mutual passion never escaped their lips.

' Quando legemmo il disiato riso
Esser baciato da cotanto amante,
Questi, che mai da me non fia diviso,
La bocca mi baciò tutto tremante.'

After this avowal, she hastens to complete the picture with one touch, which covers her with confusion—

———— ' We read no more that day.'

She utters not another word: and yet we fancy her before us, with her downcast and glowing looks, while her lover stands by

her side listening in silence and in tears. Dante too, who had hitherto questioned her, no longer ventures to inquire in what manner her husband had put her to death, but is so overcome by pity that he sinks into a swoon..... Francesca, to justify herself, must have criminated her father, and thus diminished the affecting magnanimity with which her character is studiously endowed by the poet..... She was the daughter of Guido da Polenta, Dante's protector and most faithful friend. The poet had probably known her when a girl blooming in innocence and beauty under the paternal roof. He must at least have often heard the father mention his ill-fated child. He must therefore have recollected her early happiness, when he beheld the spectacle of her eternal torment; and this, we think, is the true account of the overwhelming sympathy with which her form overpowers him. The episode, too, was written by him in the very house in which she was born, and in which he had himself, during the last ten years of his exile, found a constant asylum. .... To record this stain upon the illustrious family of a benefactor and a friend, may in our eyes appear indelicate and ungrateful; especially as it may be supposed, from his placing Francesca in hell, that he meant to hold her up to execration. .... Dante, however, constantly distinguishes between the sins and merits of each individual. Divine justice, in his poem, punishes sin whenever it is actually committed; but human sympathy, or pity, laments or extenuates the offence, according to the circumstances under which it was committed..... To satisfy divine justice he places her in hell, but he introduces her in such a manner that human frailty must pity her. Her story, he knew, was one that could not be concealed,—and he gave the daughter of his friend the celebrity which popular tradition could not bestow. The husband of Francesca was living and powerful when Dante wrote; but the fearless vengeance of the poet devotes him to infamy, and foretels that his place, named after Cain, among the fratricides, awaits him in the very centre of hell. Indeed, the father of Francesca continued to afford protection to Dante, and not only attended his remains to the tomb, but composed and recited a funeral oration over them."—*Ugo Foscolo, Edinb. Rev.* No. 60.

This opinion, as to the design of Dante in composing the episode of Francesca, Ugo Foscolo repeats in his *Discorso* several years after the work just quoted; and says, " it was manifestly written rather out of gratitude to console the father and the brothers for a calamity which could not be concealed."—*Discorso*, p. 306. It is mentioned by Boccacio that Paolo and Francesca were buried in the same grave, amid the lamentations of their weeping kindred.

A translation of this episode by Lord Byron, called by him " the cream of translation," may be found in *Moore's Life*, vol. ii. p. 309, 4to edit.

CANTO VI.

53. *Erst named me Ciacco.*

He was a Florentine gentleman, possessing, according to Boccaccio, many social and amiable qualities, but addicted to gluttony. Ciacco, a nick name, signifying a hog.

60. *But tell me, if thou knowest, what will be Attempted in the factious city next?*

The supposed date of the poem being 1300, the future history is introduced in a prophetical manner.

The factions of the Guelfs and Ghibellines had long desolated Italy;—the former, partisans of the Pope—the latter, of the Emperor. Into these two parties almost every city was divided. At Florence the Guelfs had prevailed, and banished the Ghibellins; who, however defeated, still maintained themselves as a party, opposed to the Pope and his temporal power.

At this time (1300) the Guelfs quarrelled among themselves, and divided into the factions of the Bianchi and Neri, in consequence of a family dispute at Pistoia, (see Canto xxxii. 63,) which spread to Florence. The two parties soon came to blows, and the city was threatened with destruction. By the advice of Dante, the priors or chief magistrates banished the heads of both parties. A new set, however, coming into office, most of the Bianchi were recalled, and established themselves in power for three years, (line 67,) while the Neri continued under sentence of exile. They had recourse to Pope Boniface VIII., of whom, see notes, Canto iii. 60; xix. 77; xxvii. 70. 101. By his intrigues, Charles of Valois, brother to the King of France, was induced to undertake an expedition against Florence, which was represented to him as a fountain of gold. Making the most solemn promises to the government not to change the laws and customs, and to act solely as mediator, he was admitted into the

city. By flattery and deceit, he cajoled either party (line 69) till he had acquired power; and then threw the leaders of the Bianchi into prison, and permitted the Neri, who returned with him, to commit the most atrocious outrages on their property. Their houses were pillaged and burnt to gratify the avarice of Charles; and sentence of exile and confiscation passed on 600. Among these was the poet Dante—at that time ambassador from Florence at Rome, and whose only crime seems to have been his opposition to the French prince. Gradually the Neri became identified with the Guelfs—the Bianchi with the Ghibellines;—and thus it happened, that Dante, who was by birth a Guelf, on his siding with the Bianchi to oppose the interference of Boniface and the introduction of foreigners into Florence, became necessarily attached to the Ghibellines.

65. *The woodland party shall at last prevail.*

The Bianchi, called "Parte Selvaggia" from their leaders, the Cerchi, a new family.

73. *Two just ones are there.*

This is an answer to the second question, verse 62. Who the two are is not known. Dante, and his friend Guido, are by some supposed to be intended.

79. *Tegghiaio and Farinata, names of worth.*

See Canto xvi. 41, and notes; also x. 32. 86, and notes. Of Rusticucci, see Canto xvi. 44, and note. .Of Mosca, xxviii. 106, and notes.

These men he praises for their behaviour as patriotic citizens, but places them in hell for a deficiency in their moral and religious conduct.

115. *And Plutus there, the mighty foe we found.*

Plutus—the god of riches, and therefore the great enemy of mankind;—for "the love of money is the root of all evil."

CANTO VII.

1. *Pape Satan, Pape Satan, Aleppe.*

This verse is thus explained by Signor Rossetti.

" Pap' e Satan, Pap' e Satan, Aleppe."
" The Pope is Satan, the Pope is Satan, Prince."

" The characteristic of the papal court was avarice; thousands have declared it, and Dante among the rest."

Rossetti, Sullo Spirito Antip. p. 44.

It should be remembered that the ancient commentators were not only afraid to explain allusions directed against the church but have often given interpretations altogether fictitious, which have been followed for ages by subsequent writers.

46. *Priests once, both popes and cardinals were they.*

" Such rapacity might seem incredible in men cut off from the pursuits of life, and the hopes of posterity, did we not behold every day the unreasonableness of avarice."

Hallam, Middle Ages, chap. vii.

64. *For all the gold that is beneath the moon.*

" Neither their silver nor gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath."—*Zephaniah,* i. 18.

78. *A ministering power did he assign.*

" The destinee, ministre general,
That executeth in the world over al
The purveiance that God hath sen beforne."

Chaucer, Knight's Tale, 1664.

91. *And she it is, on whose devoted head.*

" In vain, said then old Melibee, do men
The Heavens of their fortune's fault accuse,
Sith they know best, what is the best for them;
For they to each such fortune do diffuse,
As they do know each can most aptly use."

Spenser, Fairy Queen, book vi.

CANTO VIII.

5. *Another answered, so remote to view.*

The distant flame which answered the signal, is shown, by the context of this and the next canto, to have proceeded from one of the towers of the city of Dis, whence the poets were separated by the Stygian lake. The signal was to advise of their approach.

"The use of signals by fire is very ancient. A fire lighted on the top of a hill, or on a tower, was seen at a good distance. In the night the blaze served the purpose, as the smoke did during the day time. This kind of telegraph is mentioned by Homer, Iliad xviii."—*Panizzi, note to Boiardo*, vol. ii. p. 214.

19. *Flegias, Flegias, the outcry thou dost make*
For once avails thee not.

Phlegyas was a son of Mars. His daughter having been violated by Apollo, he was so enraged that he set fire to the temple of the God at Delphi, for which he was sentenced to hell. His name signifies fire, and he is the conductor to the city of fire.

"Phlegiasque miserrimus omnes
Admonet, et magnâ testatur voce per umbras:
Discite justitiam moniti, et non temnere Divos."—*Æn.* vi. 618.

21. *We stay not with thee, but to cross the lake.*

i. e. You will be disappointed for once;—we do not come to remain, as you suppose.

27. *Till I embarked no burden press'd the tide.*

"Gemuit sub pondere cymba
Sutilis, et multam accepit rimosa paludem."—*Æn.* vi. 413.

32. *One rose before me, smear'd with mud.*

Philippo Argenti—a very wealthy man, of great strength and stature, proud and arrogant, and of a most irascible temper. *Boccaccio, Decam.*

72. *Which, as in furnace heated, seem to glow.*

" Cyclopum educta caminis
Mœnia conspicio."—*Æn.* vi. 550.

119. ———— *in sighs he seem'd to say,*
" Who hath denied me these abodes of woe ? "

" Virgil does not speak, but sighs; and his sighs are most eloquent language, which Dante, who well understands human nature, interprets to mean, " Who hath denied me admission to these abodes of woe?"—*Biagioli.*

125. *For erst a at less secret gate 'twas shown.*

The gate at the entrance into hell (Canto iii.)—supposed by Dante to have been broken open by our Saviour, when he came to take the souls of the Fathers. See Canto iv. 53.

129. *One cometh unescorted from on high.*

—An angel, sent from heaven to their assistance, and who, in the next canto, enables them to enter the city of Dis.

CANTO IX.

4. *As one who listens, he attentive stood.*

Unable to see far, he endeavours by listening to ascertain the approach of the expected messenger from heaven, alluded to at the end of the last canto.

7. *He then began: "To triumph in this fight."*

Virgil betrays his doubts in broken language, which may be thus filled up. "We are sure to conquer, unless I am deceived; but so mighty is the expected aid, it cannot fail."

16. *Down from that circle of the dread abyss.*

Dante fearing lest Virgil might not know the way, and not wishing to put a direct question, asks him "Does ever any one of those who live (like thee,) where the only punishment is to have no hope (Limbo, C. iv. 39), come so low as this place?

"It appears that Dante supposed he was in the lowest pit of hell. Virgil undeceives him, (line 28,) and informs him that a place situated much lower was in reality the bottom."—*Rossetti.*

23. *By fell Erichtho conjured down below.*

"Erichtho, a Thessalian sorceress, according to Lucan, (Phars. lib. vi.,) was employed by Sextus, son of Pompey the Great, to conjure up a spirit, who should inform him of the issue of the civil war between his father and Cæsar."—*Cary.*

"Charles Martel, we are told, had occasion to send one of his knights to hell, who accordingly went and returned."

Panizzi, Romantic Poetry of the Italians, p. 90.

44. *Attendant on the queen of endless woe.*

Proserpine, queen of hell, the same as the moon.

62. *Behold the secret lore intended here,*
Which my mysterious minstrelsy would shroud.

" Signor Rossetti is of opinion that the effect of the Gorgon being to produce fear and a prostration of the faculties, this passage, in reference to that in the second Canto, where fear is said "to turn a man aside from nobler deeds," (line 46,) implies that every exertion should be made, by shutting the eyes or using other means, to prevent the effect of intimidation."—*Com.* vol. i. p. 250.

" The moral drawn by Signor Polidori may at the same time be adopted—that when one sees a friend in great danger, and is desirous to extricate him, one should not be satisfied with merely giving him advice, and suggesting means of escape, but should make every personal exertion to render him assistance."—*Signor Polidori,* quoted by *Rossetti, Com.* vol. i. p. 275.

67. *Like to the raging of a mighty wind.*

" Non altrimenti fatto che d' un vento
Impetuoso per li aversi ardori;
Che fier la selva, e senza alcun rattento
Li rami schianta, abbatte, e porta fuori;
Dinanzi polveroso va superbo,
E fa fuggir le fiere e li pastori."

" This comparison is certainly one of the most beautiful that ever poet imagined, whether we consider the grandeur of the idea, or its sublimity, or the justness of its application, or the harmony and majesty of the verse."—*Professor Panizzi.*

70. *Tears off the boughs, beats down, and hurls away.*

" ' Porta i fiori,' ' carries away the blossoms,' is the common reading. ' Porta fuori,' which is the right reading, adopted by

Lombardi in his edition from the Nidobeatina, for which he claims it exclusively, and I had also seen in Landino's edition of 1484, and adopted from thence, long before it was my chance to meet with Lombardi."—*Cary.*

It may be added, that the reading of "fuore" is used by Tasso in quoting the line (t. iv. p. 109, edit. di Firenze.) Compare also *Ger.* lib. cxiii. st. 46. Rossetti prefers "fiori" flowers, as more suited to his theory; but it were indeed an "impotent conclusion" to say that the wind, after tearing down the branches of the forest, hurls away the flowers.

Compare *Virg. Georg.* i. 329; *Lucretius*, i. 272 to 295, where the most magnificent description of a storm is given at length. *Principio venti vis, &c.*

80. *Fleeing from one, who o'er the Stygian pass.*

At last the heavenly messenger or angel makes his appearance; —the inability of the poets to obtain admission into the city of Dis being *dignus vindice nodus.*

98. *Think how your Cerberus was overthrown.*

Hercules made forcible entry into the infernal regions, and enchained Cerberus.

102. *By other care oppressed and troubled more.*

Hence Milton describes his angel:

——————"On some great charge employed
He seem'd, or fixt in cogitation deep."—*Par. Lost*, iii. 628.

CANTO X.

4. *Virtue supreme! I then began.*

This invocation is addressed to Virgil, who had been ordained in heaven to lead Dante through Hell. (See Canto xxi. 84.)

11. *When from Jehosaphat they shall return.*

See Joel, iii. 2, 12.

18. *And likewise to the wish thou hast suppressed.*

Expectations of seeing Farinata had been raised by Ciacco. Canto vi. 86.

21. *A lesson thou thyself hast lately taught.*

See Canto iii. 76, and ix. 87.

32. *Lo Farinata!*

Farinata degli Uberti was the head of the Ghibelline party at Florence: "Controuling with the hand of a master the course of events, as well as the minds of men, destiny itself seems to submit to his will; and the very torments of hell are insufficient to disturb the haughty tranquillity of his spirit. He is admirably pourtrayed in the conversation which Dante has assigned him. Every passion is concentrated in his attachment to his country and his party; and the exile of the Ghibellins inflicts upon him far greater torments than the burning couch on which he is reclining."—*Sismondi, Ital. Hist.* c. ix. *Roscoe's Transl.*

42. *Exclaimed—" Who were thine ancestors?"*

Farinata was very proud of his birth; Dante, whom he took for some plebeian, equally so.

48. *That more than once their forces I dispers'd.*

Having learnt that Dante's ancestors were Guelfs, as the poet himself was by birth, Farinata shows his indignation by his manner, and exults in having twice defeated them; the first time in 1248, the second time in 1260.

49. *Though vanquished, still they feared not to return.*

Dante, a Guelf at the time this is supposed to have been written (1300), supports the character of the party, and retorts upon Farinata, that the Guelfs had returned after both these defeats, which was more than the Ghibellins had done: in the first instance, when they were recalled by the people of Florence on the death of Frederick II.; in the second, after the death of Manfred, king of Sicily, in 1251.

52. *Then at his side another shade arose.*

Near to Farinata, and interrupting his discourse, rises the shade of Cavalcante Cavalcanti; who, overhearing the conversation, and aware that Dante was present, was desirous to make inquiry concerning his son Guido Cavalcanti, Dante's most intimate friend.

62. *Lo, yonder is my faithful escort, whom*
Guido thy son, perhaps, had scorned to own.

Guido was a great poet, (*Purg.* xi. 97); but perhaps had no taste for Virgil. The partiality of the father erroneously ascribes to him a genius equal to that of his friend Dante. Another reason which has been assigned for the scorn of Virgil imputed to Guido, is, that the latter was a materialist, and therefore likely to look down upon the opinions of one who was thought worthy of being the guide of the Christian poet, and by some supposed to prophesy the coming of our Saviour. (See note, Canto I. 73.)

68. *" Had," didst thou tell me?*

" This young gentlewoman had a father :—
O that " had"—how sad a passage 'tis."

All's Well that Ends Well, Act i. sc. 1.

70. *When he observed a short delay ensue.*

At the time Dante actually wrote, it is probable Guido had been dead several years. Though he was still alive according to the supposed date of the poem, 1300, his death was about to take place.

" Dante's ignorance of the inability of the spirits to foresee events immediately about to take place, (see lines 96, 103,) is the poetical reason of his silence, though excited to break it, out of compassion for Guido's father; wherefore at first he stands in doubt."—*Ugo Foscolo, Discorso,* p. 286.

Meanwhile " changing not his countenance, and bending not to sympathize with the distressed parent, Farinata exhibits, as Ugo Foscolo observes, the most exact description of human nature, as it exists in the brave, and hence arises one of the most striking beauties of poetry. The soul is pictured to us of one who, feeling afflictions as a man, conceals them as a citizen; and does not permit domestic grievances to distract his thoughts from the calamities of his country. Wherefore he is silent as to his son-in-law (Guido), and, continuing his discourse, says that the banishment of the Ghibellins gave him more torment than the fiery bed whereon he lay with the followers of Epicurus." (See *Discorso,* p. 288.) He was punished for being a heretic, but his heresy is justly palliated by Sismondi, on the grounds " that he was disgusted with the vices and hypocrisy of the Popes," *(Ital. Hist.)* to whose intrigues Italy owed, and still owes, her misery and degradation.

79. *But that fair lady, who here beareth sway.*

The moon, in heathen mythology, is also called Proserpine, or Queen of Hell.

81. *Ere thou wilt know how much that art doth weigh.*

Farinata here foretells to Dante his exile (note, Canto vi. 60.)

86. *When Arbia's stream ran purple to the sea.*

The battle of Arbia, or Mont' Aperti, was fought in 1260, between the Florentine Guelfs and the exiled Ghibellins, who had taken refuge with their friends at Sienna. The Guelfs, having collected their allies, advanced to Mont' Aperti, near that city, with an army of thirty thousand men. The Ghibelline forces, including the emigrants, the Siennese, and a body of Germans, sent to their assistance by Manfred king of Sicily, amounted only to eighteen thousand, headed by Farinata. On the arrival of the Guelfs, who hoped to enter the city by treachery, out rushed their enemies with the greatest impetuosity and spread universal consternation. The victory was complete, and a dreadful slaughter ensued.

91. *But when assembled numbers had decreed*
To sweep fair Florence from the earth away,
My voice alone was raised against the deed.

After the battle of Mont' Aperti, such alarm prevailed in Florence, that the Guelfs determined in a body to quit the city. No resistance was therefore made on the arrival of the victorious army. A general assembly of the Ghibelline states was held at Empoli, to adopt measures for upholding their influence. As the only means of giving security to their party, the ambassadors of Pisa and Sienna proposed to destroy Florence, which had long been the chief support of the Guelfs in Tuscany. The demolition of the walls, and the dispersion of the people, could alone, they said, prevent the re-union and future vengeance of their enemies. This demand was universally approved by the smaller states, which, having been long depressed by the superior power of Florence, would have viewed its destruction with delight. Nor was the proposal displeasing to many of the Florentine nobles themselves, who would gladly have shaken off all connection with the city, and regained that independence which their castles in the country formerly afforded. Such was the general feeling, when Farinata degli Uberti addressed the assembly, and rescued Florence from destruction. A most eloquent version of this speech is put into the mouth of Farinata by Machievelli, in his history of Florence.

CANTO XI.

8. *Inscribed: Pope Anastasius I contain.*

There were several popes of the name, with whom Dante seems to have confounded the Emperor Anastasius.

45. *Grieving, where all was given him to enjoy.*

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."—1 *Tim.* vi. 17.

70. *But tell me—those within the muddy marsh—*

In the text a misprint has escaped notice: those within the marsh, and those driven by the wind are confounded. The text should be read thus:

But tell me,—those within the muddy marsh—
Those driven by wind—those beaten down by rain—
And those who, meeting, use such language harsh.

Those within the muddy marsh are the wrathful. Canto viii.
Those driven by wind, the lascivious. Canto v.
"Those beaten by the rain," the gluttons. Canto vi.
"Those who meeting," &c. the avaricious and prodigals. Canto vii. The neutrals, Canto iii. are never mentioned again. "Let us not speak of them," he said; and thus they are consigned to eternal oblivion.

73. *Tell me—within the city fraught with fire.*

The city of Dis.

79. *Dost thou forget thine ethics?*

Aristotle, Ethics, vii. 1.

88. *Soon wilt thou see why from these shades of guilt*
They are removed.

Dante puts together the prodigals and usurers, as being guilty through wilfulness.

.... Quid enim differt, barathrone
Dones quidquid habes, an nunquam utare paratis.
Horace, Sat. ii. 3, 166.

The others here alluded to (mentioned, line 70,) are led astray by their passions, and therefore punished more severely.

91. *O sun, that healest all distemper'd sight!*

This invocation is made to Virgil. In the first Canto the sun is made to signify reason.

98. *Philosophy not once alone hath told.*

Aristotle, Physics, ii. 2.

106. *These two, if Genesis thou call to mind.*

If you consider that God, in the Book of Genesis, enjoins man to work for his daily bread. (iii. 19.)

114. *O'er Caurus Charles's Wain appears to rest.*

Caurus is the north-west wind. Charles's Wain—the constellation Bootes, or the Great Bear. Judging from the hours which were past, Virgil concludes it must be near morning in this world, and therefore time to proceed.

CANTO XII.

6. *Down into Adicë with ruin driven.*

It is not known exactly in what part of the valley of Trent this took place; but somewhere between Roveredo and Ala in the tract called Slavini di Marco. See *Eustace, Class. Tour*, C. ii.

9. *Affords no road to one upon the rock.*

Compare Canto III. 42; and see note.

12. *The shame of Crete.*

The Minotaur.

17. *The Duke of Athens here thou thinkst, I trow.*

" Whilom, as old stories tellen us,
There was a duke that hight Theseus;
Of Athens he was lord and governour."

Chaucer, Knight's Tale, Dryden's Trans.

20. *Comes not instructed by thy sister now.*

By the instructions of Ariadne, the sister of the Minotaur, Theseus was enabled to destroy him.

37. *It fell, if right I judge, but just before*
His coming dread—

Our Saviour went and preached to the spirits in prison, (1 *Peter*, iii. 19,) and according to Dante, when he ascended from hell carried with him the souls of the patriarchs and other just men. See Canto IV.

42. *The universe was seized; which 'tis believed*
Hath often times to chaos turned the world:

It was believed by Empedocles that the elements of the world were animate, and at certain periods were affected with love towards each other, and that by the combination of opposite elements chaos was occasionally produced.

45. *Both here and elsewhere, into ruins hurled.*

"And behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent."—*St. Matthew*, xxvii. 51.

69. *And in his death took vengeance on his foe.*

"Moriens animam abstulit hoste."—*Æn.* ix. 443.

88. *She ceased awhile her hallowed songs on high.*

Beatrice, Canto ii. 70.

90. *No robber he.*

He is not come, like Theseus and Hercules of old, to carry any one away by violence.

97. *Then, to the right inclining, Nessus spake.*

We have been informed (verse 70) that Chiron stood in the midst between Nessus and Pholus, the former on his right hand.

109. *That forehead covered with so black a hair*
Is Ezzelino.

Ezzelino da Romano.

"By extraordinary vigour and decision of character, Eccelin da Romano became, after some years, the absolute master of three cities, Padua, Verona, and Vicenza; and the Guelf party, beyond the Adige, was in consequence entirely subverted during the continuance of his tyranny. It was the usual trick of beggars, all over Italy, to pretend that they had been deprived of their eyes or limbs by the Veronese tyrant. There is hardly an instance in European history of so sanguinary a government, subsisting for more than twenty years. The crimes of Eccelin are remarkably well authenticated."—*Hallam, Middle Ages*, chap. iii. pt. i.

He is described by Ariosto as a most cruel tyrant, a son of the devil, and a monster so detestable, that Marius, Sylla, and Nero would appear merciful in comparison. (See *Orl. Fur.* iii. st. 33.) "After a rebellion of the Paduans, he burnt 12,000 men in an enclosure. Distrusting his minister, Aldobrandino, he asked him if he knew who were there enclosed. The minister answered that he had a list of them all: the tyrant said it was his intention to make a present of these souls to the devil, in return for his numerous benefits, and that he wished him to accompany them with his list, and present them severally. The minister was accordingly burnt with them."—*Landino.*

111. *Obizzo d'Este, with flaxen locks and fair.*

Having assigned to punishment a violent Ghibelline tyrant, Dante now adds a Guelf of the same character. Obizzo was Marquis of Ferrara, and by vigilance had amassed a great treasure, and obtained possession of the city of Ferrara. He is said to have been suffocated by his son, who was a Ghibelline. For this unnatural crime Dante calls him a step-son.

119. *'Twas he in God's own fane, with hand accurst,*
Who pierced the heart o'er Thames revered, he said.

In the year 1270 Guy de Montford, son of Simon de Montford, Earl of Leicester, in the city of Viterbo, during mass and the elevation of the host, stabbed Henry, the nephew of Henry III. king of England, in revenge for the opprobrious death of his father. Villani says "that the heart of Henry was put into a golden cup and placed on a pillar at London bridge over the Thames, for a memorial to the English of the said outrage." —(*Hist.* vii. 40.)

CANTO XIII.

2. ———————— ——— *a wood,*
Which not a trace of any path contained.

Compare description of this wood with that in the first Canto. "The trees in the wood are wicked souls; the branches are their thoughts, crooked and perplexed; the leaves are their words, gloomy and mournful; the fruits are their actions, injurious and destructive."—*Rossetti.*

9. *Betwixt Cecina and Corneto found.*

A wild marshy tract between these two rivers in the neighbourhood of Leghorn.

10. *There the foul harpies build their nests.*

See *Virg. Æn.* iii. 214.

37. *Now turned to stocks are we, who once were men.*

———" Nor damned ghost, quoth he,
Nor guileful sprite, to thee these words doth speake,
But, once a man, Tradubio, now a tree."—*Fairy Queen*, i. 2.

48. *What in my verses he hath seen of yore.*

Namely, similar effects on plucking branches from the tree into which Polydorus was turned. See *Æn.* iii. 22.

" Nam, quæ prima solo ruptis radicibus arbos
Vellitur, huic atro linquuntur sanguine guttæ
Et terram tabo maculant."—*Æn.* iii. 27.

58. *Know, I am he, who held the double keys*
Of Frederick's heart.

Piero delle Vigne, Chancellor to the Emperor Frederick II. Born at Capua of a humble parentage and educated at Bologna, where he distinguished himself by his talents and application, Peter de Vignes chanced to attract the notice of the Emperor, who became so attached to him that he made him his secretary, and promoted him to the highest offices in the state. By his advice laws were improved, universities founded; and to his taste for poetry was the literature of the age greatly indebted. The circumstances attending the fate of this extraordinary man are wrapt in much mystery. Mathew Paris, the only historian who gives any details, states, that being convicted of an attempt to poison the king he was condemned to lose his eyes; a sentence, the execution of which he anticipated by striking his head with such violence against the wall as to cause immediate death. According, however, to the general belief of the succeeding age, Peter de Vignes fell a victim to calumny, and this was evidently the conviction of Dante, by whom he is placed, not among the traitors, but among those who have committed suicide. The poet felt much interested in his fate, and considered it a duty to do all in his power to rescue his memory from the disgraceful calumnies which, emanating from the Court of Rome, and spread by the jealousy of courtiers, poisoned the mind of the Emperor, and proved his destruction, A. D. 1246.

65. *From Cæsar's dwelling turn'd her wanton eye.*

The Emperor, Frederick II. is here called Cæsar, as the Emperors inherited their rights from the Cæsars. The harlot is Envy, as is evident from line 78.

73. *Now by these fresh and tender roots I swear.*

Imitated from Virgil, *Æn.* xii. 206: *Iliad*, i. 234.
Hence too Shakespeare—

"Now by my sceptre's awe I make a vow."—*Richard II.* Act. i. sc. 1.

75. *Who merited so well the fame he bare.*

Frederick II. For defending his inheritance against the unwarrantable attacks of successive Popes, this prince has been represented by catholic writers as devoid of virtue and religion.

" I am not aware," says Mr. Hallam, " of any period in the reign of Frederick when he was not obliged to act in his defence against the aggressions of others. If he had been a model of virtues, such men as Honorius III. Gregory IX. and Innocent IV. (the Popes with whom he had successively to contend,) would not have given him respite while he remained in possession of Naples as well as the empire.—*Hallam, Middle Ages,* c. iii. part 1.

104. *But none again their bodies may resume.*

This is an answer to the second question proposed, line 89.

112. *E'en like to one, who, at his station armed.*

Imitated by Chaucer.

" Right as the hunter, in the reign of Thrace,
That standeth at a gappe with a spear,
When hunted is the lion or the boar;
And heareth him come rushing in the greves,
And breaking both the boughes and the leaves."

Knight's Tale.

118. *Now haste thee, haste thee, Death! the foremost cried.*

Lano, a Siennese gentleman, who having squandered away all his fortune, rushed desperately into the midst of the enemy, in the battle fought at Toppo, near Arezzo. Though foremost, he knew he should be overtaken by the dogs, and cried out for death to come to his rescue.

119. *The other, who was somewhat lagging.*

Jacopo St. Andrea, (line 133,) a Paduan, who ruined himself by extravagance.

137. *Say who wert thou, who thus through many a pore.*

The name of the Florentine here addressed is not mentioned; supposed to have been Rocco di Mozzi, or Lotto degli Agli.

146. *And were it not in passing Arno o'er.*

Villani relates that the Florentines having, while they were yet Pagans, appointed Mars their protector, they built a temple to this Deity, in which they placed his statue, represented by a warrior on horseback; that after they became Christians they took down this idol, and placed it upon a high tower near the river Arno; that it was thrown down at the time Florence was destroyed by Totila, and remained in the river till the re-building of the city (801) in the time of Charlemagne, when it was recovered and placed upon a pillar now at the head of the Ponte Vecchio.

A prophecy had been current that Mars would continue to revenge himself for the dishonour done him in substituting John the Baptist for their first protector, and again reduce Florence to the state in which she was left by the Goths unless his statue was restored.

He adds, as a curious fact, " that the year before the unhappy division of the Guelf party into the Neri and Bianchi took place, the new house for the Priors was built at the foot of the Ponte Vecchio, in doing which they removed the statue of Mars so as to change the front of it. Hence, alluding to the ancient legend relative to this statue, it was said, ' Please God that our city may not undergo great changes.' "—*Villani*, b. viii. c. 37.

149. *On ashes left by Attila abhorr'd.*

Dante, contrary to the opinion of historians, says that Attila destroyed Florence. He certainly destroyed many Italian cities, and is punished for his violence, Canto xii. 134, where he is called the scourge of earth. Villani, however, says it was Totila who destroyed Florence.

The Florentines are here satirized for having, by their evil practices, rendered themselves unworthy the protection of St. John the Baptist. Thus having offended both their protectors, they were given up to the misery Dante describes throughout his poem.

CANTO XIV.

1. *Love for my native country gaining force.*

Dante, thinking of his country, complies with the request of the Florentine in the last canto, line 142; a request he could not repeat, as he is supposed to be half choked with blood.

15. *Trodden by Cato and his martial band.*

See *Lucan Phars.* ix. 382.

39. *The soil ignited to augment their pain.*

" The burning marle, not like those steps
Of heaven's azure, and the torrid clime,
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire."
Par. Lost, i. 296.

46. *What mighty one is that—who stern and proud.*

Capaneus, one of the seven kings who besieged Thebes, described by Statius as " superum contemptor et æqui." He uttered such blasphemies against Jove that he was struck by lightning. " Behold a fine picture of this inflexible and haughty blasphemer.! Behold with what art the divine genius of the poet unites all the colours most suited to his character. In his stern look, in his air, in his actions and in his words, is seen the proud and arrogant Capaneus, whom not even the fire of hell itself can subdue."—*Biagioli.*

60. *From sweet revenge he ne'er shall reap delight.*

Milton has amplified this idea, *Par. Lost*, i. 94.

79. *E'en as the rivulet from Bulicame.*

A warm medicinal spring near Viterbo, said to have been carried into the houses of some licentious women there.

94. *An isle there is encircled by the sea.*

"Creta, Jovis magni medio jacet insula ponto."—*Æn.* iii. 104.

Compare *Odyss.* i. 172.

103. *A huge old man stands in the mount upright.*

This ideal statue of Time, Chronos, or Saturn, is placed within mount Ida, in Crete, because the first or golden age is feigned by the poets to have had its commencement there under the reign of Saturn. The back of the image is turned towards Damietta, in Egypt, which country was the seat of the ancient superstitions; the face is directed to Rome as the seat of the modern. The different metals and rivers are intended to represent the different ages of the world, each gradually increasing in wickedness. See *Daniel's* image from which this is taken, c. ii. *32.*

119. *They form Cocytus' lake.*

Situated at the bottom of hell.—See Canto xxxi. and seq.

137. *There where the shades resort, their forms to lave.*

In Purgatory, where, after due penance done, the spirits are allowed to procure oblivion of their past crimes by washing in the river Lethe.

CANTO XV.

7. *And such as to protect from Brenta's might.*

"The country through which the Brenta flows is a dead flat, but highly cultivated, well wooded, and extremely populous. The banks are lined with villages, or rather little towns, and decorated with several handsome palaces and gardens."

Eustace, Classical Tour, cap. iv.

9. *Ere melts the snow on Chiarentana's height.*

Chiarentana is a part of the Alps, whence the Brenta derives its source.

29. *Then downward to his face my own I bow.*

Dante was walking on one of the margins raised above the stream. He informs us, (line 43,) that he dared not descend, for fear of being scorched.

30. *Exclaiming Ser Brunetto, art thou here?*

Brunetto Latini was Dante's preceptor, and wrote a work called Il Tresor, a compendium of the knowledge of the age. Though learned, he was given to the vices of that period; nor did Dante, notwithstanding the gratitude he felt, think it right to pass over his wickedness, in a poem, where he admits of no partiality, and consigns all to the situations they deserve.

50. *Bewildered in a vale, I went astray.*

See Canto i. 2; Purg. xxx. 123.

54. *Who by this path-way reconducts me home.*

" The soul uneasy and confined—from home,
Rests, and expatiates in a life to come."

Pope, First Essay on Man.

55. *A glorious port, if thou pursue thy star.*

" If you avail yourself strenuously of the talent you have received from heaven."—*Ugo Foscolo, Discorso*, p. 373.

62. *Who erst came down from lofty Fiesole.*

Florence received an accession of inhabitants from Fiesole, when several families left that lofty situation, and for commercial purposes settled in the valley.

" The walls of Fæsulæ, its theatre, and the ruins that have come to light there, exhibit a greatness inferior to that of no other city."—*Niebuhr, Hist .of Rome, Hare and Thirlwal's Trans.* vol. i. p. 98.

74. *The beasts of Fiesole:—be spared the plant.*

Dante here calls himself " the plant," (*Ecclesiasticus*, x. 19). A few lines before, he described himself as " the pleasant fig"—" the sweet herb "—for which either party is said to pant—meaning the parties of the Bianchi and Neri. See note, Canto vi. 60.

90. *If e'er I reach her who will know my doom?*

Beatrice. See Canto x. 130.

109. *Priscian proceeds with that accursed crew.*

A celebrated grammarian.

110. *Accorso too.*

A famous lawyer.

112. *Who by the Servant's servant was dismissed.*

A title assumed by the popes. The person spoken of is supposed to be the Bishop Andrea Mozzi, translated by the Pope from the see of Florence to that of Vicenza, (through which runs the river Bacchiglione,) in order that his scandalous life might be less exposed to observation.

119. *My Treasure recommend, in which I live.*

See note, line 30.

CANTO XVI.

1. *The murmur of the waters now I heard.*

The roar of Phlegethon falling into the eighth circle.

18. *That haste would rather thee than them befit.*

They were distinguished men—the same concerning whom Dante had inquired of Ciacco, (Canto vi. 79).

34. *He in whose track I tread.*

The shade who speaks is between the other two, and his discourse refers to the one before him—Guidoguerra,—grandson of Gualdrada, a noble Florentine lady, distinguished for her virtue and beauty.

41. *Is Tegghiaio Aldobrand.*

Tegghiaio Aldobrandi degli Adimari was a noble Florentine of great military talent. In the parliament held by the Florentines (1260), to deliberate whether they should attack Sienna or not, he spoke against the measure, and was upbraided for cowardice. The result proved the correctness of his judgment. (See account of the defeat of the Guelfs at Mont' Aperti, note, Canto x. 85.)

44. *Was Rusticucci.*

" Jacopo Rusticucci was a rich Florentine of distinction, but unfortunate in having an imperious wife, whom he abandoned, and followed wicked courses."—*Volpi.*

61. *I leave the gall:—of that sweet fruit in quest.*

Bitter gall, and sweet fruit, are Scriptural expressions to represent vice and virtue. The fruit may here signify the sight of Paradise, and the religious benefit to be thence derived to himself and others.

70. *For Borsieri.*

Another Florentine—whom Boccaccio terms a man of elegant manners and ready wit.—*Dec.* i. 8.

73. *Thee, Florence, have an upstart race, and new.*

Instead of giving a direct answer to the question of Rusticucci concerning Florence, he breaks out into an apostrophe to that city, as if she could hear his rebuke.

" This is one of the many instances in which our poet mingles with stern justice of observation, a sentiment of plaintive tenderness for his own country."

Ugo Foscolo, No. 60, *Edinb. Rev.*, Art. *Dante.*

" Florence, and other small republics, after extirpating their nobles, were governed by merchants, who, having neither ancestors to imitate, nor generosity of sentiment, nor a military education, carried on their intestine feuds by calumny and confiscation."—*Ibid. Parallel between Dante and Petrarch.*

92. *Before the sound of waters.*

The waters of Phlegethon.

102. *Whence thousands might derive a full supply.*

This appears to be an allusion to some friars in a convent there, who were very few and very rich.

106. *Around my waist I had a girdle tied.*

The girdle is in the Scriptures the symbol of fortitude. Some have supposed that Dante in early life entered the order of St. Francis, and assumed the girdle; and this, they say, Dante was directed to throw down into the gulf, as a bait, to allure Geryon or Fraud to them, by leading him to suppose that a hypocrite was waiting to be conveyed to punishment.

118. *Alas! how cautious mortals ought to be!*

Dante was at a loss to understand Virgil's object, and by his manner betrayed his anxiety. This want of confidence in his master, he is aware, is perceived by him; and, expecting a rebuke, he exclaims, "Alas!" &c.

124. *That truth which bears the semblance of a lie*
Should never pass the lips, if possible.

"Abstain from all appearance of evil."—1 *Thess.* v. 22.

"The disposition of a liar is dishonourable, and his shame is ever with him."—*Ecclesiasticus*, xx. 26.

131. *A monstrous figure swimming up to me.*

The idea of swimming through the air is taken from Virgil.

"Insuetum per iter gelidas enavit ad Arctos."—*Æn.* vi. 16.

CANTO XVII.

1. *Behold the beast.*

Geryon—the symbol of Fraud. He was an ancient king of Spain, feigned by the poets to have three bodies, from having dominion over three islands, Majorca, Minorca and Ivica. He is said to have been a most crafty person, and was slain by Hercules.

2. *Who pierces mountain, wall and armed host.*

" Aurum per medios ire satellites,
Et perrumpere amat saxa, potentius
Ictu fulmineo."— *Horace,* book iii. ode 16.

10. *The features of an honest man he wore,*
So outwardly benignant.

" O what a goodly outside falsehood hath!"
Merchant of Venice, Act 1, Scene 3.

" The picture of Fraud is exactly delineated: Fraud first makes attack by assuming the mien of an honest man, disarming his victim, and winning his confidence. He then either uses his arms and employs force, or involves him in endless devices and knotty intrigues. At last comes the tail, hitherto concealed, from which he puts forth his poisonous sting."—*Rossetti.*

56. *With certain sign and certain colour deck'd.*

The purses of each were emblazoned with their armorial bearings; and to this their eyes were fondly directed.

59. *I saw a lion's semblance and aspect.*

The arms of the Gianfigliazzi, a distinguished family at Florence.

63. *On which was wrought a goose more white than curd.*

The arms of the Ubbriachi.

65. *A lusty swine in azure colours stood.*

The arms of the Scrovigni. The speaker is Rinaldo Scrovigni, who lived at Padua, and says that his neighbour Vitaliano, a greater usurer than himself, would shortly sit next him. He adds, that the Florentines around him were expecting the arrival of Giovanni Bujamonte, an usurer of Florence, the most infamous of his time, and whose coming they anticipated with ironical exclamations.

108. *Whereby the heavens took fire, as still appears.*

From the accident of Phæton, the charioteer of the Sun, when

" Mentis inops gelidâ formidine lora remisit," (*Ovid.*)

a fabulous story arose that the heavens had taken fire, and that what we call the milky way was the effect of the conflagration.

127. *E'en as a falcon.*

" Dante must have loved hawking. He paints his bird to the life."—*Ugo Foscolo, Edinb. Rev.* No. 58, Art. *Dante.*

He frequently introduces the same idea. (See *Purg.* xix. 64, *Par.* xix. 34.) Milton seems to have had Dante in his mind when he describes Satan hovering over the abyss of hell:

" Coasting the wall of heaven on this side night,
In the dun air sublime; and ready now
To stoop with weary wings, and willing feet,
On the bare outside of this world."—*Par. Lost*, iii. 69.

CANTO XVIII.

2. *Called Malebolge.*

The eighth circle is called *Malebalge*, i. e. evil cells, and is divided into a number of compartments.

10. *As is the form presented to the eye*
By fortresses.

This passage is translated on the authority of Lombardi, supported by Monti, who declares "figura" to be the right reading, instead of "secura." The "for security" in the translation is superfluous. See *Monti, Proposta, in Rendere.*

29. *Which flocks, the year of jubilee, to Rome.*

This year (1300) was famous for what we now call the universal jubilee, invented and celebrated for the first time by Pope Boniface VIII. A report was current in Rome, which spread to the country, that great indulgences would be obtained by those who visited the churches of Rome during the last year of every century. In January and February a prodigious concourse of strangers were seen flocking to Rome; and this induced Boniface to issue a bull, granting full and complete pardon of all their sins to every one who should visit the churches of Rome once every day during the space of fifteen days for strangers, and thirty for the Romans. And this to satisfy the devotion of the people—a devotion most advantageous to the pope, by reason of the great alms which the strangers spontaneously made to the churches. . . . A crowd of people from all parts of Christendom met in this present year. It seemed a continual procession, or an army on march through all the principal roads of

Italy.—*Muratori, Ann.* 1300, quoted principally from Villani. See *Villani*, vol. iv. c. 36.

Guglielmo Ventura, author of the Chronicle of Asti, who went to Rome to obtain indulgencies this year (1300), relates, that full two million persons attended for the same purpose, and that the crowd was so great, that he frequently saw men and women trodden under foot by each other, and he himself incurred great danger. He adds: "The pope received from them an immense sum of money, since two priests stood day and night holding rakes in their hands, and raking together money without end. The indulgence was established for every hundredth year by Pope Boniface; but his successors, to satisfy the devotion of the people, and for the gain of the Romans, made alterations, establishing it every twenty-five years, as at this day."—Quoted in *Muratori, Annali*, A.D. 1300.

30. *Means are devised to form a double way.*

During the time of the jubilee, in order to enable the crowds to pass and repass the bridge of St. Angelo with greater ease, Boniface divided it by a partition; so that on one side all had before them the Castle of Adrian, on the other Mount Aventine.

50. *Caccianimico must thou be.*

Venedico Caccianimico was a Bolognese, said to have been bribed to prevail on his sister Ghisola (line 55) to yield to the desires of Obizzo d'Este, Marquis of Ferrara, making her believe that he intended to marry her. Obizzo is mentioned among the tyrants in Canto xii.

59. *That not 'twixt Reno and Savena's rill.*

The city of Bologna, situated between these rivers, is distinguished by a peculiarity of dialect, in using the affirmative "Sipa" instead of "Sia" or "Si."

133. *Thais, the harlot, who when Thraso cried.*

"Magnas vero agere [gratias] Thais mihi?"
"Ingentes."

Cicero, quoting this passage, observes,—Satis erat respondere "Magnas." "Ingentes" inquit. Semper auget assentator id, quod is, cujus ad voluntatem dicitur, vult esse magnum.—*De Amicitiâ.*

Dante represents the dialogue as taking place between Thais and her paramour, without the intervention of the servant Gnatho.

CANTO XIX.

1. *O Simon Magus! O ye wretched train!*
Rapacious!

That the rapacious simoniacal train alluded to means the popes, is evident from the context of the whole Canto. Simon Magus wished to purchase of St. Peter the power of conferring the holy spirit.—*Acts*, viii. 18, 19, 20. "For if the Holy Ghost leaves polluted temples and unchaste bodies;—if he takes away his grace from those who abuse it;—if the Holy Ghost would not have descended upon Simon Magus at the prayer of St. Peter, (if St. Peter had taken money from him)—it is but reasonable to believe the Holy Ghost will not descend upon simoniacal, unchaste concubinaries, schismatics, and scandalous priests."—*Jeremy Taylor*, Serm. vi. *The return of Prayers.*

"Simony, or the corrupt purchase of spiritual benefices, was the characteristic reproach of the clergy in the eleventh century." *Hallam, Middle Ages*, ch. vii.

"No man looks for holiness in the bishops of Rome;—those are the best popes who are not extremely wicked."—*Papirius Masso*, quoted by *Jeremy Taylor*, Serm. 14, 2d part, *Growth in Grace.*

5. *For you 'tis meet the trumpet sound aloud.*

Of you, says Dante, must I speak in strong language;—your abominable crimes require that I should make them known with a voice like the sound of a trumpet.

17. *Than in St. John's fair fane.*

The church of St. John the Baptist at Florence.—The accident mentioned by Dante had caused him to be charged with sacrilege.

49. *Like to a friar I stood, that doth confess*
A murderer.

The punishment assigned to murderers was to be buried alive topsy turvy. Some of the most hardy would refuse to listen to the friar who came to confess them; but after they were fixed in the hole, and the earth thrown in, would recal the friar, in order to gain a short respite from death.

53. *Art thou arrived, and upright, Boniface?*

The punishment assigned to each pope is to be fixed in a hole upside down, there to remain till the arrival of his successor, who takes his place—he himself being thrust still deeper. Pope Nicholas in this situation mistakes Dante for Pope Boniface the Eighth coming to succeed him, and expresses his surprise at seeing him some years sooner than he had foreseen, and standing in an upright position, instead of being ready to be thrust head-first into the hole he himself then occupied.

56. *For which with treachery the Lady fair.*

The Lady fair represents the Church, which has been impiously called the spouse of the pope. Of Boniface, see note, line 77.

69. *Know—with the mighty mantle was I clad.*

Nicholas III., created pope in 1277. He was of the Orsini family, and hence calls himself the son of a bear. He was a man of learning, but excessively eager to promote his family.

72. *My wealth I've stow'd above—my person here.*

"We take pains to heap up things useful to our life, and get our death in the purchase; the person is snatched away, and the goods remain."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

77. *When he arrives whom I took thee to be.*

Pope Boniface VIII. For the manner in which he obtained the popedom from St. Celestine, see notes, Canto iii. 60. "After he was raised to the pontificate," says Sismondi, "Boniface manifested the two prevailing traits of his character, pride without bounds, and passion, which bordered upon fury, whenever it met with opposition."—*Hist. des Repub. Ital.* cap. 24. For his conduct to the family of the Colonna, on occasion of which quarrel the violence of his character is most fully displayed, see notes, Canto xxvii. 70. Dante there calls him "the prince of modern Pharisees," and Villani, who is inclined to favour him, says "he had no scruples of conscience in the acquisition of wealth, to aggrandize the church and enrich his own relations; that he made bishops and archbishops of many of his friends and confidants, and cardinals of two of his nephews who were extremely young."

79. *But my scorched feet have longer suffered pain.*

Twenty years elapsed between the death of Nicholas and that of Boniface; but only eleven between the death of the latter and that of Clement V.

82. *For after him—more impious and unjust—*

Clement V., who by the favour of Philip the Fair, King of France, was promoted from the archbishopric of Bourdeaux in 1305. By his desire, in order that the future popes might be more under the influence of France, he transferred the seat of government to Avignon. (See *Purg.* xxxii. 158.)

Guicciardini, speaking of Pope Clement, whom he calls a good pope, adds, "I mean not apostolical goodness; for in those days he was esteemed a good pope that did not exceed the wickedness of the worst of men."

85. *He, like another Jason.*

See *Maccabees*, 2d book, iv. 7, 8, 10. As Antiochus granted the desire of Jason at the price he offered, so Clement V. obtained the popedom by conceding to the terms of Philip the Fair.

93. *He asked no more than simply—" Follow me."*

" And he said unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."—*St. Matthew*, iv. 19.

94. *Nor gold nor silver the disciples took.*

See *Acts*, cap. i. 25, 26, and compare *Par.* xxii. 88.

106. *To you St. John referr'd, O shepherds vile,*
When She who sits on many waters, had
Been seen with kings her person to defile.

She who (as St. John describes her) first arose on earth with seven heads, (meaning the primitive church, called the spouse of Christ, and indicative of her strength while she continued virtuous,) has been seen to defile herself with kings:—*i. e.* The pope, who stiles himself the husband of the church, has intrigued and made alliances for impure and sordid purposes with the kings of the earth. (See *Revelations*, xviii. 2, 3, &c.)

112. *Your God ye make of silver and of gold.*

St. Paul tells us, " that covetousness is idolatry."—*Coloss.* iii. 5. See also *Eph.* v. 5. *Hosea*, viii. 4.

115. *Ah Constantine! what evils caused to flow.*

This passage was translated by Milton:

" Ah, Constantine, of how much ill was cause
Not thy conversion, but those rich domains
That the first wealthy pope received of thee."

A similar passage in the *Orlando Furioso* (xxxiv) was also translated by him:

" Then passed he to a flowery mountain green
Which once smelt sweet, now stinks as odiously;
This was the gift, if you the truth will have,
That Constantine to good Sylvester gave."

" It was among the first effects of the conversion of Constantine to give not only a security, but also a legal sanction to the territorial acquisitions of the church."—*Hallam, Middle Ages*, chap. vii.

Dante, however, though he frequently alludes to this supposed donation, (see *Inf.* xxvii. 94; *Par.* xx. 60,) shows his disbelief of it in the *De Mon.* b. iii.; and Gibbon considers it altogether a forgery. " This memorable gift," says he, " was first introduced to the world by an epistle of Adrian I., who exhorts Charlemagne to imitate the liberality, and revive the name of the great Constantine. According to the legend, the first of the Christian emperors was healed of the leprosy, and purified in the waters of baptism by St. Sylvester, the Roman bishop; and never was physician more gloriously recompensed. His royal proselyte withdrew from the seat and patrimony of St. Peter; declared his intention of founding a new capital in the east; and resigned to the popes the free and perpetual sovereignty of Rome, Italy, and the provinces of the west .... The Emperors were incapable of discovering the forgery that subverted their rights. In the revival of letters and liberty the fictitious deed was transpierced by the pen of Laurentius Valla, an eloquent critic, and Roman patriot."—*Decline and Fall*, chap. 49.

CANTO XX.

15. *Compelled them blindly to pursue their track.*

" But very uncouth sight was to behold
How he did fashion his untoward pace;
For as he forward moved his footing old,
So backward still was turned his wrincled face;
Unlike to men, who, ever as they pace,
Both feet and face one way are wont to lead."

Spenser, Fairy Queen, b. i. c. viii. st. 31.

28. *Here pity lives when dead.*

" Though human pity should melt at the afflictions of the good, every tear shed at the misery of the wicked would accuse the divine judgment of cruelty."—*Ugo Foscolo, Discorso,* p. 91.

32. *For whom the land of Thebes was seen to gape.*

Amphiaraus was one of the seven kings who besieged Thebes, and a celebrated soothsayer. He foreknew that it would be fatal to him to engage in the war, and accordingly concealed himself; but his wife was bribed to discover the place of his retreat, and he was forced by Adrastus to accompany the army. He is said to have been swallowed up by the earth, which opened under his feet, when the exclamation was made, " Quì præceps per immane ruis?"—(*Statius, Thebais.*)

40. *Behold Tiresias.*

A celebrated soothsayer, who, on striking two serpents, was changed into a woman, and before he regained his sex was obliged to beat the serpents again for the space of seven years. See *Ovid, Met.* lib. iii. 325.

46. *Arons is this, to like reverse consign'd.*

Arons was a distinguished Tuscan soothsayer, who dwelt in the mountains of Luni above Carrara.

"Aruns incoluit deserti mœnia Lunæ."—*Lucan, Phars.* i. 586.

55. *Was Manto.*

A Theban sorceress, daughter of Tiresias, who lived at Thebes, a city dedicated to Bacchus, and afterwards enslaved by Creon; to escape whose tyranny Manto left her native country, wandered into Italy, and settled where Mantua now stands.

67. *Here is a spot.*

Called Prato di Fame, where three dioceses meet, and where the bishops exercised their episcopal jurisdiction in common.

72. *A warlike front Peschiera doth present.*

"At Peschiera the lake terminates in the Mincio, which flows through the town, broad, deep, and clear as crystal, though almost as rapid as a mountain torrent."—*Eustace, Class. Tour.*

74. *That from Benacus' bosom running o'er.*

The more modern name is Lago di Garda.

"Fluctibus et fremitu assurgens, Benace, marino."
Virg. Georg. ii. 160.

78. *E'en to Governo, where it joins the Po.*

"At the beautiful village of Governolo the Mincius makes a sudden bend, and shortly after loses itself in the Po, about twelve miles below Mantua."—*Eustace, Class. Tour.*

95. *Ere Casalodi foolishly believed*
The artful tale that Pinamont had told.

Alberto Casalodi, who possessed Mantua, was persuaded by Pinamonte Buonacossi that he might ingratiate himself with the people by banishing to their own castles the obnoxious nobles. No sooner was this done, than Pinamont put himself at the head of the populace, drove out Casalodi and his adherents, and obtained the sovereignty for himself.—See *Muratori*, anno 1269.

112. *Eurypylus his name.*

"Suspensi Eurypylum scitatum oracula Phœbi
Mittimus."—*Æn.* ii. 114.

116. *Was Michael Scot, renowned for magic art.*

Michael Scot was a Scotchman, of great learning and skill in astrology, alchemy and natural philosophy. He was looked upon as a magician both in his own country and abroad. Boccaccio calls him a great necromancer, and mentions his having been at Florence.

"Dempster informs us, that he remembers to have heard in his youth that the magic books of Michael Scott were still in existence, but could not be opened without danger, on account of the fiends who were thereby invoked. Accordingly the memory of Sir Michael Scott survives in many a legend; and in the south of Scotland any work of great labour and antiquity is ascribed either to the agency of Auld Michael, of Sir Wm. Wallace, or of the Devil."—*Walter Scott, Notes, Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

118. *Lo Guido, and Asdente.*

Guido Bonati, an astrologer of Forlì. Asdente, a shoemaker of Parma, who deserted his business to practise divination.

125. *Cain and the thorns.*

The moon; or what is vulgarly called the man in the moon. See *Parad.* ii. 51, where Dante ridicules the fable.

CANTO XXI.

37. *O Malebranche of our bridge.*

The demons that had the care of that bridge, or of the compartments under it.

38. *Quoth he, " of Santa Zita's Elders here."*

Santa Zita was held in reverence at Lucca, where this sinner was an elder or magistrate. His name is supposed to have been Martino Botaio.

41. *Except Bonturo, all are barterers there.*

" This is ironically spoken of Bonturo de' Dati, the greatest peculator in Lucca."—*Venturi.*

48. *Here hath the holy countenance no place.*

At Lucca was an image of our Saviour, which the inhabitants invoked in distress.—*Ottimo Com.*

49. *Here swim you not as erst in Serchio's tide.*

" The Serchio intersects the plain, and almost bathes the walls of Lucca."—*Eustace, Class. Tour.*

67. *With furious tempest.*

See Ariosto, *Orl. Fur.* v. 82.

76. *Go, Malacoda—go.*

"Malacoda was the name of one of the demons, corresponding to the name of the place, Malabolge; and signifying the fiend of the evil tail, or most deceitful."—*Rossetti.*

82. *Unless the will divine had sanction given?*

This passage tends to prove that Dante considered himself in the light of a person destined by heaven to produce a great reformation in the world. See *Introduction.*

95. *Who left Caprona on capitulation.*

The castle of Caprona surrendered to the combined forces of Florence and Lucca, on condition that the garrison should march out in safety. This event, to which Dante was a witness, took place in 1290. See *Villani*, vii. 136.

111. *Another bridge that's near will serve your need.*

This is an instance of Malacoda's treachery. See Canto xxiii. 136.

113. *Twelve hundred three-score years and six gone by.*

To 1266 add 34 (the age of our Saviour at the time of his death) and it will give 1300, the date of Dante's descent into hell. "And behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent."—*St. Matthew*, xxvii. 51.

This convulsion Dante supposes was felt even in the depths of hell.

CANTO XXII.

1. *Oft squadrons have I seen their station change.*

"The signal of departure made by Barbariccia to his companions has given occasion to the poet of making a grand and sublime opening to the present Canto. . . . . Many beauties are scattered throughout this Canto, of a description pleasing, not to the many, but the few, who seek them in nature, whence the poet has drawn them, and invested them with their own simple and characteristic colours."—*Biagioli.*

Dante sarcastically continues his description of the devil's march; and says, that having heard all kinds of military music, he never witnessed such a strange signal as that by which the demons were directed.

15. *But saints at church, and gluttons at a feast.*

"A proverbial expression, signifying the necessity of adapting ourselves to our company."—*Lombardi.*

48. *Navarre, he answered, was my native land.*

The name of this barterer was Ciampolo, in the service of Thibault, King of Navarre. For an account of this king, see *Mariana, Storia di Spagna*, lxiii. c. 9.

82. "*The friar Gomita was it,*" *he replied.*

The friar Gomita being entrusted with the government of Gallura, one of the four jurisdictions into which Sardinia was divided, received a bribe from his master's enemies, and let them escape.

88. *With him too Michael Zanche doth reside.*

Michael Zanche, governor of Logodoro, another of the four Sardinian jurisdictions.

96. *And said: "Go, get thee gone, ill bird abhorr'd."*

Barbariccia, seeing Farfarello preparing to strike Dante, makes this exclamation, adapted to the wings he wore and the form of his eyes.

119. *Each from the bank his eyes withdrew.*

"According to the proposal of Alichin, the fiends retired, and for a moment withdrew their eyes from the bank to give the sinner a chance."—*Venturi.*

151. *And we advancing, left them floundering there.*

The reader should be aware that the poet has imagined this incident, not only to afford pleasure, and to show the nature of barterers and the disposition of devils, but in order to obtain the most simple mode of extricating himself; profiting by the present entanglement to avoid a vengeance which otherwise, without divine assistance, he could not have escaped.—*Biagioli.*

CANTO XXIII.

1. *Silent and slow our lonely path we trod.*

" Taciti, soli, e senza compagnia."

" The poets meditating upon the late incident, by which Dante would invite the reader to do the same, arrive at the next bridge in profound silence, and alone, since all the devils were engaged in the above-mentioned entanglement."—*Biagioli.*

37. *Like to a mother wakened by a cry.*

A picture is here given, after Dante's peculiar manner, in a few strokes. Rapidity both of thought and expression are most remarkable in the succeeding verses of the original.

59. *A painted tribe of spirits I survey.*

" Behold the chasm in which are punished the hypocrites. Their penance is terrible, and well suited to their iniquity, since at the same time it recals to mind and places before the eyes of these miserable spirits the reason of their cruel torments."—*Biagioli.*

66. *That Frederick's cloaks compared with them were light.*

Frederick the Second punished those guilty of high treason by covering them with lead, and then casting them into a furnace. This example had been set by the Popes. See *Ducange*, Glos. v. *Cappa*, *Plumbea*.

105. *Elected by your country for umpires.*

In the year 1266, Florence being torn by the contending parties of the Guelfs and Ghibellins, it was agreed to appoint two governors from another country, who would be free from prejudice, and administer justice impartially. This good intention was de-

feated by the unfortunate choice made of two Bolognese knights of the order of Frati Gudenti, N. Catalano and M. Loderingo. Great dependance was placed on the character of the order, and by their pretended virtues were the Florentines deceived. These two hypocrites, chosen to act as mediators, and preserve peace in the city, abused their power to promote their own interests. Bribed to support the Guelfs, they drove out the Ghibellins, and destroyed the houses of the family of the Uberti, which were in the street called Gardingo. See *Villani*, b. vii. c. 13.

115. *Before you lies transfixt, the shade.*

"Now Caiphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people."—*St. John*, xviii. 14. His hypocrisy consisted in promoting an evil action under the pretence of conferring a public benefit, and sanctioning crimes under the plea of expediency.

121. *His father Annas.*

See *St. John*, xviii. 13

139. *With head inclined, awhile my leader stood.*

"Virgil, ashamed of having given credence to Malacoda, whom he had consulted about the road, (Canto xxi. 111,) stands awhile in thought, and then exclaims against his duplicity."—*Rossetti.*

142. *To him the friar: "Much of the devil's vice I at Bologna heard."*

The friar intimates that he could expect nothing but deceit from a devil such as Malacoda. See *St. John*, viii. 44.

145. *With mighty strides my guide indignant sped.*

Virgil felt the reproach conveyed in the friar's answer, and strode away, desirous to escape from the College of Hypocrisy.

CANTO XXIV.

1. *In the young year, when Sol his tresses gay*
Dips in Aquarius.

At the end of January, when the sun enters into Aquarius.

" The opening of this canto, and this new simile, taken from nature itself, possesses great beauty. It seems one of those passages where the poet wishes to show what he really is—superior to all others. His principal object is to paint his despair, though short lived, on seeing Virgil so troubled."—*Biagioli.*

" In no writer, not even in Homer, have the similes more life and variety than in Dante."—*Ugo Foscolo, Edinb. Rev.* vol. xxix.

9. ———————— *whereat he strikes his thigh.*

" Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh."—*Jeremiah*, xxxi. 19.

Δή ῥα τοτ' ᾤμωξεν τε, καὶ ὦ πεπληγετο μηρω.—*Iliad*, xii. 162.

37. *But Malebolge, since throughout it lies.*

Since the whole region of Malebolge slopes towards the centre, every part must possess the same inclination.

47. *For not beneath rich canopies of state,*
On beds of down, must Fame be sought by man.

" Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
To scorn delights, and live laborious days."

Milton, Lycidas, 70.

" But Fame, with golden wings aloft doth fly,
Above the reach of ruinous decay;
And with brave plumes doth beat the azure skie,
Admired of base born men from far away."

Spencer, Ruines of Time.

" Renown is not the child of indolent repose."

Thomson, Castle of Indolence.

52. *Arise then, and o'er sloth a conquest gain.*

" Would thou then learn to dissipate the band
Of those huge threatening difficulties dire,
That in the weak man's way like lions stand,
His soul appal, and damp his rising fire,
Resolve, resolve, and to be men aspire."—*Castle of Indolence.*

54. *Unless the body's cumbrous weight restrain.*

" For the corruptible body presseth down the soul."—*Wisdom*, ix. 15.

" Oft when my spirit doth spread her bolder wings,
In mind to mount up to the purer sky,
It down is weighed with thought of earthly things,
And clogged with burden of mortality."—*Spencer*, sonnet 72.

55. *A longer flight of steps thou yet must scale.*

The mountain of Purgatory.

65. ———————— *when from the other foss.*

The seventh chasm, as distinguished from the sixth, which he had just described.

77. *For every modest and sincere demand*
Deserves fulfilment, not in word, but deed.

" Full of grace are the words of Virgil to Dante—so beautiful is the sentiment they contain;—and he who at the first reading does not give them a gracious reception in his heart and mind, has good reason to find fault with his nature."—*Biagioli.*

93. *No hiding place—no heliotrope had they.*

Heliotrope was supposed to possess the power of counteracting poison, and rendering persons invisible.

" For behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices among you, which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you, saith the Lord."—*Jeremiah*, viii. 17.

107. *The phœnix dies, and springs to life again.*

Imitated from *Ovid, Met.* xv. 392.

125. *Mule that I was; my name is Vanni Fucci.*

Vanni Fucci was a natural child of the family of Lazari, in Pistoia, and of the Neri party—a man of infamous character. " He is ashamed," Signor Rossetti observes, " of being found by a Bianco in such a humiliating situation among the robbers." —(line 132.)

139. *One who was innocent incurr'd the blame.*

Having robbed the church of St. James, in Pistoia, he charged Vanni della Monna with the sacrilege, who was put to death in consequence.

142. *Open thine ears, and hear what I declare.*

Vanni Fucci, in revenge, foretells the circumstances that led to Dante's banishment. (See note, Canto vi. 60.)

143. *First from Pistoia shall the Neri flee.*

The quarrel which led to the division of the Guelf party into the Neri and Bianchi originated at Pistoia, and led to important changes at Florence. (See note, Canto vi. 60.)

145. *From Valdimagra Mars collects around.*

" The commentators explain this prophetical threat to allude to the victory obtained by the Marquis Morello Malaspina, of Valdimagra, (a tract of country now called the Lunigiana,) who put himself at the head of the Neri, and defeated their opponents the Bianchi in the Campo Piceno, near Pistoia."—*Cary.*

CANTO XXV.

12. *More rife in crime than e'en thy fathers were.*

Alluding to the prevailing opinion that the people of Pistoia were descended from the followers of Cataline, who, according to Sallust, took refuge there.

15. *Not he, from Thebes' high battlements who fell.*

Capaneus, of whom see Canto xiv. 46, and notes.

20. *Than in Maremma's marsh may be survey'd.*

Maremma is a low marshy tract near Sienna, on the coast of Tuscany. "Farther south is the Maremma, a region, which, though now worse than a desert, is supposed to have been anciently both fertile and healthy. The very air is only a pool of vapours, which sometimes undulate, but never flow off. It draws corruption from a rank unshorn vegetation, from innumerable insects, from living and dead reptiles and fish. All nature conspires to drive away man from this fatal region; but man will ever return to his bane, if it be well baited. The Casentine peasants migrate here in the winter, and decamp in summer, but often too late, for many leave their corpses on the road, or bring home the Maremma disease."—*Forsyth's Italy*, p. 126.

43. *Exclaiming: Where can Cianfa be concealed?*

Cianfa was one of the family of the Donati at Florence. "To understand the exclamation, it must be remembered that the three spirits who lately arrived had been in company with Cianfa; and he, it seems, remained behind. This gave rise to the question asked by Agnello Bruneleschi, where he was. In

the mean time Cianfa is changed into a serpent, and returns to seize on Agnello."—*Rossetti.*

67. *In wonder lost, the other two looked on.*

Buoso degli Abati—a Florentine, also of Donati's family, mentioned line 141. Puccio Sciancati—a noted robber, mentioned line 148.

83. *A viper came.*

The spirit of Francesco Guercio Cavalcante, the same mentioned in the last line of this canto.

85. *And in that part.*

The navel.

94. *Now let Nasidius' and Sabellus' fate.*

They were two Roman soldiers in Cato's army, who were stung by serpents. Lucan relates that the latter fell instantly into ashes.—*Phars.* ix. 766.

97. *Silent be Ovid.*

Metam. book v. 573.

133. *The tongue which, undivided, freely spoke.*

According to the vulgar error that the serpent's tongue is forked.

151. *The other's death thou, Gaville, dost atone.*

Guercio Cavalcante's. This robber was killed at Gaville, in the Valdarno; and his death was cruelly revenged by his faction, who slew the inhabitants, and wasted the country with fire and sword.

CANTO XXVI.

1. *Exult, O Florence, in so great a fame!*

This exclamation is ironical, as is shown by the second stanza, which refers to the five citizens mentioned in the last canto.

9. *That Prato and your neighbours wish for you.*

The calamities here foretold, were a dreadful conflagration that destroyed above 1700 of the principal houses in Florence; the falling in of a bridge over the Arno, on which a vast multitude were assembled; and, generally, the discord and sanguinary battles between the Neri and Bianchi, in 1304.

What here appears to be predicted, was written after the events took place. Prato is a town in the neighbourhood of Florence. In the following lines Dante alludes to his banishment.

21. *And more than I am wont my mind restrain.*

Dante, witnessing the punishment of others for perverting their talents to the injury of mankind, seems to feel remorse for the harsh expressions he has just uttered against his own country, and restrains the indignation he felt against those who were the cause of her unhappiness.

" The better qualities are to be understood of the sublimity of his genius, which the poet recognized as the peculiar gift of heaven."—*Biagioli.*

48. *Who in this scorching garb their persons hide.*

It is not to be supposed that the spirits willingly enwrap themselves in flame, but have brought such punishment on themselves by the evil counsels they gave in their life time.

54. *Where lay Eteocles and his brother slain.*

The enmity of the two brothers, Eteocles and Polynices, is represented to have been so inveterate that the fire which consumed their bodies on the same funeral pile, refused to unite, and divided itself into two distinct flames.—*Statius, Theb.* xii. 430 ; *Lucan*, i. 145.

57. *Hasten to pain as erst to wrath they sped.*

As Ulysses and Diomed were in their life time associated in deeds of treachery and violence, so are they now united in suffering and torment.

62. *Deidamia doth Achilles wail.*

Ulysses also suffers punishment within the flame for the deceit he used towards Achilles, to induce him to join the Grecians in the siege of Troy ; telling him the prediction of the oracle, that without his aid Troy could not be taken, but suppressing that part which foretold his death as the consequence. Achilles abandoned Deidamia to go to the wars ; and her grief is represented here to have been so great as to have continued even after death.

83. *Here tarry, and let one of you declare.*

Meaning Ulysses.

93. *Ere yet Eneas thus had named the shore.*

So named from Æneas's nurse.

> " Tu quoque litoribus nostris, Æneia nutrix,
> Æternam moriens famam, Caieta, dedisti."—*Æn.* vii. 1.

108. *Where Hercules his pillars hath uprear'd.*

The Straits of Gibraltar, then said to be the extreme west.

112. *Comrades, I said, who now have reach'd the west,*
And won your way through perils infinite.

" O socii, neque enim ignari sumus ante malorum,
O passi graviora, dabit Deus his quoque finem."—*Æn.* i. 198.

116. *That land without inhabitants to find.*

Gibraltar was supposed to be the limit of the habitable world. That Ulysses perished in an attempt to pass the Straits is an opinion taken from Pliny, and adopted by Tasso.

119. *For not to live like brutes were ye designed.*

Be ye not like to horse and mule, which have no understanding; whose mouths must be held with bit and bridle, lest they fall upon thee.—*Psalm* xxxii. 10.

125. *We strained our oars to wing our foolish flight.*

" De' remi facemmo ali al folle volo."

The idea is from Virgil's "remigium alarum," *Æn.* vi. and *Lucan's* (b. vi.)

" Remigio oblitæ remorum vela remittunt."

Thus Æschylus. πτερυγων ἐρετμοῖσιν ἐρεσσόμενοι.—(*Agamemnon*, first chorus.)

139. *Thrice did it drive the ship and waters round.*

" Ast illam ter fluctus ibidem
Torquet agens circum, et rapidus vorat æquore vortex."—*Æn.* i. 116.

CANTO XXVII.

7. *As the Sicilian Bull.*

Perillus, an Athenian, to please Phalaris, the cruel tyrant of Sicily, made the figure of a bull of hollow brass, capable of containing a man within, whose screams, when the image was placed over a fire, were to represent the bellowing of the beast. Phalaris made the first experiment on the contriver.

19. *These words broke forth: "O thou to whom I speak."*

The person who speaks is Count Guido da Montefeltro,—a man of great renown in war, who late in life assumed the Franciscan habit. (See his own account of himself, line 67.)

20. *In Lombard phrase but lately heard to say: "Thou may'st depart."*

This refers to the third line of the Canto, where it is said, that Virgil permitted the flame to depart,—not mentioning the words he actually used.

26. *Been hurried downward from fair Italy.*

From this it appears Guido mistook Virgil for a condemned sinner coming to be punished.

29. *For from the hills that 'twixt Urbino lie.*

From Montefeltro, a city upon the Appennines, whence the Tiber takes its source.

41. *There broods Polenta's eagle.*

Guido Novello da Polenta, Lord of Ravenna and Cervia, bore an eagle for his coat of arms; and under the likeness of a hen brooding over her eggs, Dante describes his friend and patron as the protector of Ravenna, which had continued in a state of tranquillity for many years under that family. (See *Tiraboschi Stor. dell Litt. Ital.* v. 3.) Guido is enumerated among the poets of his time. (See Notes, Canto v.) He was the father of Francesca da Rimini.

43. *In Forli, which such long resistance made.*

The city of Forli, in 1282, sustained a siege against the French, who were defeated in a sally by Guido da Montefeltro, (the spirit whom Dante addresses,) with very great slaughter. Guido, its former ruler, is informed that it is now governed by Simbaldo Ordelaffi, who had for his arms a lion vert.

46. *The mastiffs of Verucchio, young and old.*

Malatesta and Malatestino, his son, lords of Rimini, called, from their ferocity, the mastiffs of Verucchio, which was the name of their castle. (See Notes to Canto v. 127.)

47. *Whose hands with slaughter stain'd, Montagna rued.*

Montagna was a noble knight, leader of the Ghibelline party at Rimini, murdered by the Malatestas.

49. *There, where Santerno and Lamone glide.*

Upon the river Santerno is situated the town of Imola:—upon the Lamone, the town of Faenza; both subject to Machinado Pagani, whose arms were a lion azure on a field argent. He changed his politics according to circumstances; at one time a Guelf, at another a Ghibelline.

52. *That town whose bank by Savio's stream is laved.*

The town of Cesena is upon the river Savio, at the foot of the mountain, and enjoyed a mixed government.

70. *But that the mighty Priest, whom evil take.*

Pope Boniface VIII.—from his duplicity, here called the prince of modern Pharisees. (See Canto xix. 77.)

He did not, says Guido, direct his arms against Turks and Infidels, nor against those renegade Christians, by whom the Saracens, in 1291, were assisted to recover St. John D'Acre, the last possession of the Christians in the Holy Land, nor against the Jews who trafficked in the Holy Land, and sold provisions to the Turks during the siege. These were not the objects of his warfare, which was directed against Christians only, and chiefly against the Colonna family, whose houses were near the Lateran.

101. *I do absolve thee—tell the means how best*
May Pellestrino in the dust be laid.

Two cardinals of the noble house of Colonna, who possessed the town of Pellestrino, and lived like sovereign princes, opposed the election of Pope Boniface. This crime he never forgave. He published a bull against them, deposed them from the dignity of cardinals, deprived them of their revenues, and threatened with excommunication those who assisted them. They answered the bull by a manifesto, declaring that they did not recognize Boniface as Pope—that Celestine V. had not the power to abdicate, and that the election of a successor in his lifetime was invalid. This enraged Boniface the more. He renewed his bull, and published a crusade against them, with plenary indulgence to all who took part in it. He destroyed the palaces and goods of the Colonna near the Lateran, and laid siege to their castles in the country. Despairing of taking Pellestrino, he sent for Count Guido Mon-

tefeltro, who, after a most brilliant military career, had renounced the world and was living in penitence, clad in the habit of St. Francis. Guido examined the fortifications, and found no means of taking the place by force; but having received absolution of all his sins, both past and to come, he informed Boniface that he would succeed by making large promises with slack performance. Boniface acted on this advice—offered most advantageous conditions on a surrender, and promised to restore the Colonna to his favour. The town was given up; but the secret of Boniface's intended vengeance transpired prematurely; and the Colonna, apprized of his intentions to put them to death, made their escape.—See *Sismondi, Hist. des Répub. Ital. cap.* xxiv.

112. ———————— *but lo, a cherub black*
Exclaim'd "Forbear, nor take my lawful prey."

"Yet Michael, the archangel, when contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."—*Jude.*

CANTO XXVIII.

11. *When erst with golden rings the spoils were crown'd.*

The second Punic war.—After the battle of Cannæ three bushels and a half of gold rings were collected from the fingers of the knights who were slain. (See *Livy*, xxiii. 12.)

14. *The grievous blows of Robert Guiscard bold.*

Robert Guiscard was son of Tancred of Hauteville—one of those Normans who came by desire of the Greek emperor to defend his few remaining possessions in Apulia from the Saracens. Their numbers increasing by their countrymen flocking over in the garb of pilgrims, they took possession of the country which they came to defend. The investiture of Apulia and Calabria, together with the title of Duke, was confirmed to Robert Guiscard by the Pope. He died in 1110. (See *Par.* xviii. 48.)

"Even in Dante's time, the memory of the slaughter committed by the Normans in their battles was famous. The conquest of Bari is probably the action referred to by the poet in this place. The historical blunders committed by commentators, both ancient and modern, in their notes on this passage, are numberless as well as amusing, on account of their absurdity." (*Panizzi, Life of Bojardo*, note to vol. ii. p. 99.)

15. *Those others too whose bones are gathered still*
At Ceperan.

In 1265, Charles of Anjou, invited into Italy by the Pope, defeated Manfred, king of Apulia and Sicily, at Ceperan, with

such immense loss, owing to the treachery of the Apulians, that the bones of the slain long continued to be found. (See account of Manfred, *Purg.* iii. 118.)

17. ——————— *and where Alardo old,*
Near Tagliacozzo, won the victory.

The original has it, "senza arme," not meaning unarmed, or that the victory was bloodless, but effected with a small force by stratagem. Near Tagliacozzo, Charles of Anjou defeated Corradino, the successor to Manfred; where, following the advice of Alardo di Valeri, an old French baron, he obtained a complete victory with a handful of troops.

33. *E'en to the brow walks Ali, racked with pain.*

Ali was the disciple of Mahomet, but differing from him in some respects formed a sect himself.

54. *In wonderment forgetting all their woes.*

They all beholding worldly wights in place,
Leave off their work, unmindful of their smart,
To gaze on them.—*Fairy Queen*, i. 5.

56. *Exhort Friar Dolcin.*

This friar, calling himself an apostle of Christ, declared the community of wives and property, and obtained many followers, who, to the number of 3000, lived by plunder for two years in the mountains of Novara. Through want of food, and the severity of the snows, he was captured in the year 1307, and above 500 of his followers perished from starvation and the sword. He himself was burnt, and cut in pieces as a heretic; he endured his torments with the greatest fortitude, preserving

his countenance unchanged amid his sufferings. His beautiful and youthful wife, Margarita, might have avoided a similar fate, but she chose rather to follow the example of her husband than renounce her erroneous doctrines.—*Villani*, viii. 84.

59. *A triumph to Novara.*

Meaning probably the Bishop of Novara.

73. *On Pier da Medicina thought bestow.*

Piero dwelt at Medicina in the territory of Bologna. He fomented dissentions among its citizens, and between Guido da Polenta and Malatesta di Rimini.—*Volpi.*

75. *Which from Vercelli slopes to Mercabò.*

Vercelli, a city in Piedmont. Mercabo a castle on the Po. The plain of Lombardy is here described.

76. *And be these words to Fano's worthy twain,*
To Guido, and to Angiolello told.

These two most distinguished citizens of Fano, Guido del Cassero, and Angiolello da Cagnano, had incurred the displeasure of Malatesta the younger, lord of Rimini (see Canto xxvii. 46). To secure their destruction, he pretended to be reconciled to them, and invited them to an entertainment, in order apparently to transact some important business. According to his instructions, they were both drowned near Cattolica, between Fano and Rimini. Malatesta "is the traitor (verse 85,) with but a single eye."

86. *Who owns the fatal land, a spirit here.*

See note, line 97.

90. *Shall they require against Focara's might.*

Focara is a mountain on the sea coast, whence came such boisterous winds that mariners were in the habit of offering up prayers against them. Dante says, that as Malatesta will cause them to be drowned on their passage, they will have no occasion to make any prayers against the winds.

91. *Then I: Point out, and let the soul be seen.*

"If you wish me to carry back any tidings of you," says Dante, "inform me who is the person you just mentioned (line 87,) who would fain he had never seen Rimini, the country of Malatesta.

97. *From Cæsar's mind this outcast took away*
The doubt he felt.

Curio, an outcast from Rome, where he had been a follower of Pompey, went to join Julius Cæsar at Rimini (the ancient Ariminum), and, according to Lucan, determined him to pass the Rubicon, by exclaiming—

Tolle moras; nocuit semper differre paratis.—*Phars.* i. 281.

106. *Cried: "In thy mind let Mosca bear a place."*

Buondelmonte was engaged to marry a lady of the Amidei family, but broke his promise, and united himself to one of the Donati. This was so much resented by the former, that a meeting of themselves and their kinsmen was held, to consider of the best means of revenging the insult. Mosca degli Uberti, or de' Lamberti, persuaded them to resolve on the assassination of Buondelmonte, exclaiming to them, "the thing once done, there is an end." This counsel and its effects were the source of many terrible calamities to the state of Florence. "This murder," says G. Villani, (v. 38,) was the cause and beginning of the accursed Guelf and Ghibelline parties in Florence." It happened in 1215. See the *Paradiso*, Canto xvi. 139.—*Cary.*

107. *Who said—(alas the day!) "What's done is done."*

"What's done, is done."—*Macbeth*, Act iii. sc. 2.

117. *Whose breast-plate is—To know his thoughts are pure.*

"What stronger breast-plate than a heart untainted."
Second part, *Henry VI.* Act iii. sc. 2.

132. *Behold if any pangs can equal mine.*

"Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow."—*Lamentations of Jeremiah*, chap. i. v. 12.

134. *Bertram de Bornio, be it known, am I.*

He was Viscount of Hautefort, in the Diocese of Perigeux—the most ardent and impetuous of the French knights. He breathed nothing but war, and by intrigues and arms agitated the provinces of Guienne during the latter half of the 12th century (*Sismondi, Lit. Hist.*) He was the intimate friend of John, eldest son of Henry II. king of England, and encouraged him in rebellion against his father. On this history, however, taken from some old Troubadour's story, little reliance, Mr. Cary believes, is to be placed.

CANTO XXIX.

9. *Think, two and twenty miles extends the vale.*

From the extraordinary coincidence in the measurements here given, with those laid down by Nibbi, of the walls ot Rome (Mura di Roma, p. 235), Rossetti concludes that an allusion to that city is intended. (See *Com.* vol. ii. 284, and *Sullo Spirito Antip.* p. 52.)

22. *Let not compassion for his woes detain*
Thy pensive soul.

It will appear strange that Virgil, a most kind hearted spirit, should reprove Dante for showing compassion to his relation; but it must be remembered that Virgil is here speaking in the character of a Theologian, as in Canto xx. line 28.—*Monti*, Proposta, in "frangere."

27. *Geri del Bello, as I heard, was he.*

Geri was the son of Bello, brother to Bellincione, Dante's grandfather. He delighted in making mischief, and was murdered by one of the Sacchetti family. His death, it seems, was unavenged, contrary to the custom of those days. On this subject, see *Sismondi, Hist. des Ital. Repub.* vol. iv. p. 100.

28. *With him who erst in Altafort bore sway.*

Bertram de Bornio, mentioned in the last Canto (line 134).

48. *In Valdichiana, and Maremma's plains.*

A valley, in which the river Chiana formerly used to stagnate, before it was drained by the Emperor, Leopold II. See *Par.* c. xiii. 23. Of Maremma, see Canto xxv. 20. Compare Milton's description of a lazar house (*Par. Lost.* xi. 477).

109. *I from Arezzo hither came.*

Griffolino, an alchymist of Arezzo, who told Albero (a foolish youth of Sienna), by way of a jest, that he could teach him to fly. Because he did not fulfil his promise, Albero accused him of being a necromancer, and induced his father the Bishop of Sienna to have him burnt.

125. *Stricca indeed excepted.*

Stricca, Caccia of Asciano, and Abbagliato, here ironically spoken of, belonged to a company of prodigal youths in Sienna, who, it is said, sold their estates, built a palace, which they inhabited in common, and lived in the greatest luxury. Their extravagance soon ruined them.

CANTO XXX.

4. *So lost to reason Athamas became.*

See *Ovid, Met.* iv. 511.

28. *One seized Cappocchio's neck.*

The alchymist of Sienna, mentioned in the last Canto, line 136.

31. *The Aretine.*

Griffolino, the alchymist of Arezzo, mentioned in the last Canto, line 109.

32. *Said: Gianni Schicchi is the one you see.*

He was a Florentine gentleman of the family of Cavalcanti, so great a master in the art of counterfeiting, that when Buoso Donati died, Gianni was requested by the son, Simon Donati, his intimate friend, to personate the deceased, and write a will in his favour. For this important service he received (line 43) a most beautiful mare.—*Volpi.*

37. *Then answer'd he: "Know, Myrrha is her name."*

Ovid, Met. l. x. 318.

61. *To master Adams' miserable strain.*

Adamo was a Brescian, burnt for counterfeiting the coin of Florence, at the instigation (lines 76, 77) of Guido, Alessandro, and Aghinolfo, counts of Romena.

78. *I'd change it not for Branda's fountain cool.*

"We were obliged to put up at a solitary inn called Uomo Morto, an object as woful in aspect as in name. This it derives from the execution of a coiner whom Dante has packed among the damned as an accomplice to the three counts of Romena. The castle of Romena mentioned there [*i. e.* in this Canto, line 73] is a fine Gothic ruin, standing on a precipice about a mile from our inn; near is a spring called Fonte Branda. Now might I presume to differ from his commentators, Dante, in my opinion, does not mean the great fountain of Sienna, but rather this obscure spring."—*Forsyth's Italy*, p. 92.

97. *One, the false dame who Joseph dared accuse;*
Sinon the other.

The false dame—Potiphar's wife. Sinon—the deceiver who persuaded the Trojans to admit the wooden horse.

114. *When of the truth at Troy they questioned you.*

When questioned by Priam.

——————"Mihique hæc edissere vera roganti:
Quo molem hanc immanis equi statuere? quis auctor?
Quidve petunt? quæ religio, aut quæ machina belli?—*Æn.* ii. 149.

148. *The wish to hear them shows a vulgar taste.*

"Nihil viro bono et quieto magis convenit quam abesse a controversiis."—*Cicero.*

CANTO XXXI.

1. *The very tongue whose sharp rebuke had dyed.*

Virgil's, who had rebuked Dante for listening to the quarrel of Adamo and Sinon at the end of the last Canto.

4. *Thus, have I heard, Achilles' lance possessed*
A charmed power.

" Telephus æternâ consumptus tabe perisset
Si non, quæ nocuit, dextra, tulisset opem."
Ovid, Trist. l. 5. Eleg. ii. 15.

18. *Sounded Orlando such a fearful blast.*

" According to the fictitious Chronicle of Turpin, of which Ariosto has made so much use, the terrible horn of Orlando, with which he blew a blast at Roncesvalles to obtain assistance, was heard as far as St. Jean Pied-de-Pont, (four miles off,) where Charlemagne was lying with his army; but the traitor Ganellon (Canto xxxii. 122) prevented the king coming to his aid."—*Sismondi, Lit. Hist.*

41. *With lofty towers is Monterreggion crown'd.*

A castle near Sienna.

55. *For when the noble faculty of mind.*

This appears to be taken from Aristotle: — "Ωσπερ γὰρ τελεωθὲν, βέλτισον τῶν ζώων ἄνθρωπός ἐσιν· ὕτω καὶ χωρισθὲν νόμε

καὶ δίκης, χέιριϛον παντων. χαλεπωτάτη γαρ ἀδικία ἔχουσα οπλα·— ὁ δ' ἄνθρωπος ὅπλα εχων φύεται φρονήσει καὶ ἀρετᾷ, οἷς ἐπὶ τἀναντία ἐϛὶ χρῆσθαι μάλιϛα. Διὸ ἀνοσιώτατον καὶ ἀγριώτατον ἄνευ ἀρετῆς."—*Aristotle*, Pol. A B.

The giant here spoken of is Nimrod, (see verse 77,) by whom the tower of Babel is said to have been built.

59. *As at St. Peter's is the brazen pine.*

"The large pine of bronze, which once ornamented the mole of Adrian, was afterwards employed to decorate the top of the belfry of St. Peter's; and having (according to Buti) been thrown down by lightning, after lying some time on the steps of the palace, it was transported to the place where it now is, in the pope's garden, by the side of the great corridore of Belvidere. In the time of our poet, the pine was either on the belfry or on the steps of St. Peter's."—*Lombardi.*

68. *Raphegi mai amech isabi almi.*

These unmeaning sounds are supposed to allude to the confusion of languages at the building of Babel.

94. *His name Phialtes.*

Ephialtes is one of the giants who warred against Jove, and is represented by Homer as having endeavoured to place Mount Pelion on Ossa.—*Odyss.* xi. 307. See also *Virg. Georg.* i. 281; *Æn.* vi. 580.

119. *And by whose aid, if we may trust to fame.*

——————— "Cœloque pepercit,
Quod non Phlegræis Antæum sustulit arvis."
Lucan, Phars. iv.

132. *By Hercules experienced with dismay.*

" As when, earth's son, Antæus, (to compare
Small things with great) in Irassa strove
With Jove's Alcides, and oft foiled still rose;
Receiving from his mother earth new strength,
Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple joined,
Throttled at length, in air—expired—and fell.

Milton, Par. Reg b. iv.

136. *As Carisenda, viewed by one below.*

The leaning tower of Bologna.—This tower has an inclination of seven feet, and appears falling.

" Quos super atra silex jamjam lapsura, cadentique
Imminet assimilis."—*Æn.* vi. 602.

If one goes under that part which bends towards the earth, and looks at a cloud that may happen to be driven in a directly opposite direction, the cloud seems standing and the tower falling.

CANTO XXXII.

1. *Had I a rhyme so rugged, rough, and hoarse.*

" S' i' avessi le rime ed aspre e chiocce."

" Here the poet evidently hints that to give colour and strength to ideas by the sound of words is one of the necessary requisites of the art. The first six lines are made rough by a succession of consonants."—*Ugo Foscolo, Parallel between Dante and Petrarch.*

" Non mihi si linguæ centum sint, oraque centum,
Ferrea vox, omnes scelerum comprendere formas,
Omnia pænarum percurrere nomina, possim."—*Æn.* vi. 625.

28. *For Tambernicchi falling from his height,*
Or Pietrapana.

" Tambernich, a mountain of Sclavonia—Pietrapana, a very high mountain in Tuscany, not far from Lucca."—*Volpi.*

52. *And one, who from intensity of cold*
Had lost both ears.

Camicion de Pazzi, as he informs us, line 68.—He treacherously slew one of his own family.

55. *Who are these two, wouldst thou discover.*

" Alessandro and Napoleone,—sons of Alberto Alberti, who, quarrelling about their patrimony, agreed to decide the affair by a single combat, in which they destroyed each other. They possessed the valley of Falterona, whence the Bisenzio deriving its source, flows into the Arno six miles from Florence."—*Landino.*

58. ——————— *Thou mayst explore*
Caina through.

The first part of this circle takes its name from Cain, and contains those guilty of slaying their own relations.

61. *Not he whose breast together with his shade.*

Mordrec, son of King Arthur.—" In the romance of Launcilot of the Lake, Arthur, having discovered the traiterous intentions of his son, pierces him through with the stroke of his lance, so that the sunbeam passes through the body of Mordrec; and this description of the shadow is no doubt what our poet alludes to in the text."—*Cary.*

63. *Nor yet Foccaccia.*

" Foccaccia Cancellieri, a noble Pistoian, who cut off the hand of his cousin and slew his uncle; whence the factions of the Neri and Bianchi took their rise in Pistoia."—*Venturi.*

65. *And Sassol Mascheroni was he hight.*

A Florentine who slew his uncle.

68. *Know that Camicion Pazzi is my name.*

Alberto Camicion treacherously slew his kinsman Ubertino.

69. *And Carlin I expect, to wipe my guilt away.*

" Carlin de' Pazzi, one of the same family, who, belonging himself to the Bianchi party, betrayed to the Florentines of the Neri party a castle in Valdarno, for a large sum of money."—*Vellutello.*

" His guilt," says Camicion, " is so atrocious, that when he comes I shall appear innocent."—*Lombardi.*

80. *Unless you mean the vengeance to improve*
Of Mont' Aperti.

"Unless you come," says he, "to add to the sufferings I endure for my conduct at Mont' Aperti." Bocca degli Abbati is the speaker, who, having been previously corrupted by the Ghibellins, cut off the head of the standard bearer at the commencement of the battle, and by the confusion which ensued, caused the Guelfs the celebrated defeat of Mont' Aperti.

"When Arbia's stream ran purple to the sea."

See Canto x. 85, and note.

89. *Through Antenora causing such dismay.*

This division is called Antenora from Antenor, who, according to Dictys Cretensis, betrayed Troy to the Greeks.—*Lombardi.*

106. *When cried another—Bocca, art thou sane?*

See verse 80, and note.

116. *Him of Duera, may'st thou say, I viewed.*

"Buoso of Cremona, of the family of Duera, who was bribed by Guy de Montfort to leave a pass between Piedmont and Parma (with the defence of which he had been entrusted by the Ghibellines) open to the army of Charles of Anjou, A.D. 1265; at which the people of Cremona were so enraged that they extirpated the whole family."—*Villani*, vii. 4, *quoted by Mr. Cary.*

119. *Him of Beccaria at thy side include.*

Beccaria was Abbot of Vallombrosa, the Pope's legate at Florence, where his intrigues in favour of the Ghibellines being discovered, he was beheaded."—*Daniello.*

121. *Gianni Soldanier I believe beyond.*

A Ghibelline who treacherously went over to the side of the Guelfs.

122. *With Ganellon and Tebaldello.*

"According to the romantic history of Charlemagne, Gano, or Ganellon, betrayed the Christian army at the battle of Roncesvalles, where Orlando and the peers of France were slain."—*Walter Scott, Note to Dryden's Trans. of Chaucer*, vol. xi. p. 343.

Tebaldello de' Manfredi. He betrayed the city of Faenza, during the night, to the French.

130. *Not otherwise fierce Tydeus in disdain.*

Tydeus, being mortally wounded at the siege of Thebes by Menalippus, had his enemy slain and his head brought to him, upon which he exercised his revenge.—See *Statius, Theb.* l. viii.

CANTO XXXIII.

"In this last circle of hell, Dante beholds those who have betrayed their native land entombed in everlasting ice. One of them is Count Ugolino della Gherardesca, who by a series of treasons had made himself master of Pisa. The other head is that of Ruggieri degli Ubaldini, Archbishop of that state, who by means no less criminal had effected the ruin of the count; and having seized him with four of his children or grandchildren, had left them to perish by famine in prison. Dante does not at first recognize them; and shudders when he sees Ugolino gnawing the skull of his murderer. He inquires into the motives of this savage enmity, and with the count's reply this canto commences."—*Sismondi Ital. Lit.* c. ix.

But to appreciate fully the beauties of this celebrated Canto, a fuller knowledge of the circumstances alluded to is required.

In the year 1284, the Guelfs of Tuscany conspired to take advantage of the great loss sustained by the Pisans, after their defeat by the Genoese, and destroy Pisa, the chief hold of the Ghibelline party. To dissolve this confederacy, the Pisans appointed as their Captain General for ten years, Count Ugolino della Gherardesca, a man of no principle, but possessing great talent and address, as well as great influence and connection with both parties.

The temptation offered by the situation he held was irresistible, and the intrigues he entered into to dissolve the league, were directed—not to preserve the independence of his country, but to secure to his own family the dominion of Pisa, by making friends with the neighbouring states. For this purpose several castles, it is said, were betrayed to Lucca and to Florence; and several Ghibelline families banished, who appeared most ready to oppose his ambitious views.

With the persecuted Ghibellines, his former friends, sided any Guelfs who viewed his proceedings with disgust; and at the

head of the opposition was Nino, Judge of Gallura, a grandson of Ugolino himself. To overcome this opposition, Ugolino entered into alliance with Ruggieri, the Archbishop of the city. The combination succeeded, and the Judge of Gallura fled before their united forces. But Ugolino would not brook an associate; and the claim made by the Archbishop to a share in the government of the city, was haughtily refused. Ruggieri, however, was equally ambitious and crafty with the Count. He dissembled his resentment, and waited for an opportunity of revenge. This dissimulation he maintained on a subsequent occasion, when Ugolino, having established himself in power, stabbed one of Ruggieri's nephews, who came with others to represent to the Count the scarcity of provisions, and reproached him as the cause. The Archbishop waited till he had conciliated Nino, and fully secured the assistance of the Ghibellines. Then having assembled the families of the Gualandi, Sismondi and Lanfranchi, with their adherents, (line 32,) he suddenly called the people to arms against the tyrant, accused him of betraying his country in surrendering its castles, attacked his palace, and after a long combat, took prisoners the Count Ugolino himself, two of his sons, and two grandsons, threw them into a dungeon, nailed the door, and starved them to death.

In the same year that the melancholy catastrophe of Francesca di Rimini took place, observes Ugo Foscolo, Dante heard of Count Ugolino and his children being starved to death in the tower of Pisa. "From that time," says he, "it is certain he meditated upon the stories, probably made sketches, and re-touched them afterwards a thousand times; and after many years brought to perfection these two scenes so dissimilar; where neither the eye of the critic can discern the consummate art, nor the fancy of the poet reach it, nor any soul, how cold soever, not feel it; and where all appears simple nature, all ideal grandeur."—*Discorso*, p. 317.

4. *He then began: Thou bid'st me to renew*
Unutterable grief.

"Infandum, regina, jubes renovare dolorem."—Æn. ii. 3.

29. *The he wolf and his young ones.*

Count Ugolino is called a wolf, as being at the time a Guelf; the Ghibellines, his pursuers, are described as hounds.

30. *Which shuts out Lucca from the Pisan's view.*

Mount Giuliano—situated between the two cities of Pisa and Lucca.

47. *The entrance underneath with nails made fast.*

" Ed io sentii chiavar l'uscio di sotto."

An erroneous opinion prevails, that the gate of the tower was locked, and the keys thrown into the Arno; but the sound of locking the door had been heard every day, and was no novelty. The word " chiavare" means, to nail, and in the Paradiso (Canto xix. 105,) is used to express the nailing our Saviour to the cross.

49. *I wept not, for my heart was turn'd to stone.*

" Even at this sight
My heart is turned to stone."
Second part, *Henry VI.* Act v. sc. 2.

66. *Hard earth, why did'st thou not beneath us cleave.*

" τότε μοί χάνοι ἐυρεῖα χθών."—*Il.* δ. 182.
" Quæ satis ima dehiscat,
Terra mihi!—*Æn.* x. 675.

80. *Where " Si" is spoken.*

Italy, where the affirmative " Si" (yes) is used.

83. *Let Capraia and Gorgona raise a mound.*

Islands not far from the mouth of the Arno, on which the city of Pisa is situated.

91. *We then arrived.*

The circle of Ptolomea, so called, from Ptolemy, King of Egypt, who betrayed his friend Pompey.

105. *Methought at such a depth all vapour failed.*

As winds are caused by the influence of the sun, Dante expresses his surprise that in this low abyss, where the sun could not penetrate, any winds should prevail.

110. *Exclaim'd: O souls, so cruel though ye be.*

Virgil and Dante are taken for spirits proceeding to punishment in the nethermost abyss.

118. *Friar Alberigo, be it known, he said.*

One of the family of the Manfredi of Faenza, who feigning a wish to be reconciled to some of his brotherhood, (the Frati Gaudenti,) after a quarrel, invited them to a magnificent banquet. At the conclusion he called for the fruit, which was the signal for assassins to rush in and murder his guests. Hence one who had been stabbed was said to have tasted Friar Alberigo's fruit. His fig being repaid with a date (line 120) is a proverbial expression—Thus we speak of repaying a man in his own coin.

121. *What? art thou numbered with the dead?*

"Dante supposes the souls of these traitors to be precipitated into hell the moment their treachery is committed, and that their bodies are simultaneously possessed by a devil, who inhabits them during the remainder of their natural life."—*Poggiali.* See *Psalm* cix. 5.

137. *He is Sir Branca d' Oria whom I mean.*

A Genoese, who murdered his father-in-law, Michael Zanche, (mentioned Canto xxii. 88,) in order to seize his property and obtain for himself his appointment in Sardinia.

141. *But eats, and drinks, and sleeps, and dons his dress.*

> "But 'tis a spirit."
> "No, wench, it eats and sleeps, and hath such senses as we have, such."—*Tempest,* Act. i. sc. 2.

154. *For with Romagna's spirit most accurst.*

Friar Alberigo. See note, l. 118.

CANTO XXXIV.

1. *Lo, come the banners of the king of hell!*

A parody on part of the first verse of a Latin hymn, sung by the Church in praise of the Cross.

"Vexilla regis prodeunt."

8. *Whereat to shun the cutting blast.*

The wind produced by the flapping of Lucifer's wings. See line 51.

18. *The creature, once so beauteous, to display.*

Lucifer or Satan, once an angel of light; here called Dis.

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, Son of the Morning."—*Isaiah*, xiv. 12.

34. *If he were beauteous once as hideous now.*

Hence Milton,

> "If thou be'st he, but O! how fallen, how changed
> From him, who in the happy realms of light,
> Cloathed with transcendent brightness, did'st outshine
> Myriads though bright."—*Par. Lost*, i. 84.

38. *For on his head three faces were uprear'd.*

According to Vellutello's interpretation, the three faces, red, yellow, and black, denote anger, envy, and melancholy; and hence, as Mr. Cary observes, Milton derived his description of Satan.

" Each passion dimmed his face,
Thrice changed with pale ire, envy, and despair."
Par. Lost, iv. 114.

According to Lombardi, here are denoted the Europeans, the Asiatics, and the Africans.

95. *Long is the way, and rugged is the road.*

" Long is the way,
And hard, that out of Hell leads up to light."—*Par. Lost*, ii. 432.

See Virgil, *Æn.* vi. 128.

108. *Clung to the worm that pierceth earth.*

The great dragon or old serpent, " called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." See *Rev.* xii. 9.

117. *Is on Giudecca's side.*

The circle of Judas, through which Dante had lately past.

121. *Upon this spot from Heaven the traitor fell.*

" Dante tells us, that when Lucifer was hurled from the celestial regions, the arch-devil transfixed the globe; half his body remained on our side the centre of the earth, and half on the other side. The shock given to the earth by his fall drove a great portion of the waters of the ocean to the southern hemisphere, and only one high mountain remained uncovered, upon which Dante places his Purgatory."—*Ugo Foscolo, Quar. Review*, vol. xxi.

122. *And then the land, which erst was dry.*

According to the opinion that the land and sea have changed places; by Dante attributed to the effects of Lucifer's fall. See Rev. ix. 1.

127. *As far from Beelzebub as the profound*
Abyss is deep, a place there is below.

"Hitherto Virgil has been speaking to Dante; Dante now addresses us."—*Lombardi.*

Beyond Beelzebub or Lucifer, i. e. on the other side the centre, extends, he says, a rocky path, equal to the depth of hell, or the semi-diameter of the earth, so dark as to be only discoverable by the sound of a rivulet which runs through it. Up this rude path, or water course, the poets proceed to the surface of the opposite hemisphere, and again obtain a sight of the stars.

133. *My guide and I this secret pathway chose.*

"In these last verses, after the sorrow that pervades this part of the poem, begins to breathe a sweetness which prepares the soul for that calm delight with which it will be soothed from the first to the last verse of the succeeding canticle."—*Ugo Foscolo, Discorso.*

THE END.

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